

THE
Good Work
Begun in the
DAY of GRACE.
Performed untill the Day of
CHRIST.

With the Addition of a Cautionary Letter, sent unto some Youths, by an unknown Authour.

Unto which is subjoyned a Return of
Thanks to the Authour of the Letter:

With further Cautionary Motives, and Directions,
unto Youths professing Religion, to keep them
from Apostacy, and Backsliding.

By *Thomas Vincent*, Minister sometime of *Maudlin's Milk-street*, London.

1 Cor. 1. 8, 9. Who shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ: God is faithful by whom ye were called, &c.

Heb. 10. 38, 39. If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him: But we are not of them who draw back unto Perdition, but of them that believe unto the saving of the soul.

London, Printed for George Calvert and Samuel Sprint, and
to be Sold at the Golden Ball in Duke-Lane, 1673.

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THE

Good Work B E G U N.

Philip. 1. 6. *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it untill the day of Jesus Christ.*

AMONGST all the works of men, some of which have been great and illustrious, none are comparable unto the works of God; and amongst all the works of God before us, none are more admirable than the work of God within us: You have sometimes seen rare and curious works of Art, beautiful pictures, stately edifices and buildings: you see daily more curious works of nature, the substance of those shadows, the stately structure of the Earth and Heavens; but the work of Grace which cannot be seen with the Eye, doth excell every visible

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work in lustre and curiosity. *David telleth us, Psal. 139. 14, 15.*: that his body was wonderfully made, and all his members curiously wrought and fashioned by the hand of God : his soul was more wonderfully made, and there was more curiosity in the forming of his spirit with faculties of such excellent use and operations. But in the new forming of the soul after the image of God, in Gods drawing the lineaments of the new man upon the heart, is the greatest wonder and curiosity : This is the Good Work which God doth begin, and will perform. All Gods works are good, but this work is excellent ; other works are really good, but this is eminently good ; in other works God did put forth his power, and manifest his wisdom ; but in this work he hath shewed the exceeding greatness of his power, his most admirable wisdom, and withall the exceeding riches of his grace and love : other works shall be demolished, not only elementary bodies, but heavenly bodies themselves shall melt and be dissolved at last : but this good work of grace shall abide unto the day of Christ, and in the day of Christ, and then be perfected in Glory. This the Apostle doth express his confidence of in the Text. *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it, untill the day of Jesus Christ.*

This Epistle was written to the *Philippians*, when the Apostle was in bonds at *Rome*, for the Testimony of the Gospel : nevertheless, the word of God was not bound, but had the freer course, and more powerful efficacy ; his bonds did tend unto the furtherance of the Gospel : The body of the Apostle was in bonds, but his heart was not

in bonds, except it were the bonds of Love to the *Philippians*: his tongue was not in bonds, for he lets them know what Prayers he made for them, and what praise and thanks he offered unto God in their behalf: his pen was not in bonds, for in prison he writeth this excellent Epistle to them; and we have reason to bless God for those bonds which were the occasion of a work so beneficial to the Church in all after ages. After the Apostle's salutation of the *Philippians*, he doth administer matter of great joy and comfort unto them, and that in the Text; *Being confidens of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it untill the day of Jesus Christ.* In which words we have, 1. The Apostles confidence concerning the Saints at *Philippi*; and in them, of all the Saints unto the end of the world. *Being confident of this very thing.* He doth not speak of it as a doubtful thing, as an uncertain thing, which might be, or might not be, but as of a thing most sure, of which he had a full confidence and perswasion. 2. Here's the thing which he is confident of, or the matter of his confidence concerning them, *That he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.* Where we have the work of grace set forth, 1. By the quality of it; It is a *good work*. 2. By the subject of it, the Soul; a *good work*, not without you, but *within you*. 3. By the Author of it; *He*, that is God. 4. By the beginning of it, *He that hath begun a good work in you*. 5. By the accomplishment of it, and bringing of it unto perfection, *will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

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The Good Work begins.

Hence observe these two Doctrines ;

Doct. 1. *That the good work of Grace in the soul is begun by the Lord.*

Doct. 2. *That the good work which God doth begin in the day of Grace, he will perform until the day of Christ.*

S E C T. I.

Doct. 1. *That the good work of grace in the soul is begun by the Lord.*

N handling of this point, I shall shall 1. speak concerning the good work of grace it self. 2. Concerning the subject of it, which is the soul. 3. Concerning the Author of it, and shew, that it is the Lord that doth begin this good work 4. Why the Lord doth begin this good work. 5. And lastly, make some Application.

1. Concerning the Good Work of Grace it self : There are many evil works of men, such as are all sins ; the work of Grace, is the good work of God ; there are some good works which are wrought by us , this is the good work which is wrought in us ; there are some works of Grace , and gracious acts of God towards us , which effect only a relative change , such as Gods justification of our persons , his adoption of us , and admission of us into his family : but this is a gracious work of God upon us , whereby he doth effect within us a real change ; and

and although the Grace within us, is alwayes accompanied with the Grace without us, yet it is really distinct from it. This good work of Grace is begun in Regeneration, or the New-birth, when God doth effectually call us by his Word and Spirit, and powerfully turn us from darkness unto light, and from the reign of sin, unto the subjection and obedience of Christ : It is carried on in the work of Sanctification, wherein sin, which in the first work of Grace, is dethroned and mortally wounded, is more and more mortified, and the Spiritual life begun at first is maintained, and the soul is more and more quickned and enabled to live unto righteousness : In the first work, the seed of Grace is planted in the soul by the Spirit; which in the work of Sanctification doth spring up, and bring forth the fruits of holiness and obedience : In the first work of Grace, all the lineaments and members of the New man are formed in the soul, which in Sanctification are more and more shaped and fashioned after Gods image, and the New man doth grow up from its infancy more and more towards the stature and strength of a perfect man in Christ : In the first work, all the habits of Grace are infused together into the soul, which in the work of Sanctification gather strength, and do shew themselves in their lively and vigorous exercise.

We are now to speak of the first work of Grace, or the good work as it is begun by the Lord. When the Lord doth effect a gracious change in the soul, he finds the sinner empty and void of all good, filled with the guilt, and besmeared with the defilement of sin, and notwithstanding the

wounds which sin maketh in his conscience, he fintleth him insensible ; and whatever his danger be of everlasting ruine, he findeth him asleep and secure : And first the Lord meeteth with him, and putteth a stop to him in his course and career of sin, hedgeth up his way as it were with thorns ; by his providence he bringeth the sinner under the preaching of the Word, and there he sheweth him his evil work and transgressions wherein he hath exceeded, and exceedingly provoked his holy and jealous eye against him ; the Lord in his Word doth sound his Trumpet of Judgement , and awakeneth him out of his carnal security, by the loud thunderings and dreadfull lightnings of the Law , he convinceth the sinner of the guilt of sin, and the desert of sin, and the danger which he is in of the eternal damnation and destruction of Hell, which such impenitent and unbelieving sinners as he is are lyable unto ; hereupon conscience, before lull'd asleep by the Devil and deceitfull lusts, begins to be startled, taketh up its whip to lash, its sword to prick and sensibly to wound the sinner, so that in distress he cryeth out, *O what shall I do to be saved !* God at first sendeth his Spirit (in order to the preparation of the soul for the gracious change) to be a Spirit of Bondage to awaken the sinner unto fear, *Rom. 8. 15.* The Spirit doth as it were bring a Warrant from Heaven, and like a Sergeant doth clap the sinner on the back, and arresteth him for all his affronts and indignities which he hath offer'd unto the King of Heaven, for all his Treasons and Rebellions which he hath practised ; and the sinner having nothing to plead, and being unable to make his

his escape, for whither can he fly from Gods Spirit ? this Spirit of Bondage doth as it were lay him up in prison, puts chains and shackles upon his feet, and then passeth the sentence of the Law upon him, that he must dye ; lets him know that he is cursed, *Gal. 3. 10.* condemned already, *Job. 3. 18.* and that the Execution is not far off : thus the sinner is brought into great distress and perplexity of mind ; he looks about him for help, but all succour fails him ; he struggles and would fain break the bonds which are upon him, but he finds himself the more entangled ; he endeavours to divert his grief, and throw away his troubles, but he is the more perplexed and wounded ; then he seeks after something to appease Gods anger, and quiet the clamours of his conscience, and he flies to Duties, to Ordinances ; he prayeth, and heareth, and readeth, turns from his former ungodly company and practices, and frequents the company of the Saints and Servants of God, and joyneth with them in all Religious observances and exercises ; but still he findeth (if God worketh upon him effectually) that none of these can remove the guilt of one sin, and that the righteousness is but imperfect, which doth result from the most strict performance of any Duties ; and therefore he looketh upon himself, as worthless and helpless in himself, and perceiveth that it lyeth not in the power of any creature to help him : But having a discovery made of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is mighty and able to save to the uttermost, all those that come unto God by him, *Heb. 7. 25.* being made acquainted with the perfect righteousness of Christ, and the full satisfaction which by his death he hath given unto

Gods justice for mans sin , and having a free proffer made of this to him, and a gracious invitation to come unto Christ, that he might have pardon and life by him, being powerfully drawn by the Spirit, he is inclined and enabled to come to him, and to lay hold on him, whereby he is joyned unto Christ , and receiveth life from him. And thus the good work of Grace is begun ; the nature of which will further appear in the second particular.

S E C T. II.

2. **C**oncerning the subject of this good work of Grace, and that is the Soul. He that hath begun the good work in you, that is, in your souls ; it is the whole soul is the subject of this grace, which the Lord doth work.

1. In the good work of Grace the understanding is enlightned ; the Spirit of the mind is renewed, *Eph. 4. 23.* the understandings of graceless persons are darkned, *Eph. 4. 18.* they cannot know the things of the Spirit of God, because they are spiritually discerned, *1 Cor. 2. 14.* there is a black night upon their Spirits, a worrie than Aegyptian darkness doth over-spread the face of their souls ; there is a vail of ignorance and unbelief before their eyes, which keepeth off the light of the knowledge of God from them ; hence it is that they do not apprehend the beauty and excellency which is in God and Christ , and the wayes of holiness :

The Good Work begun.

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holiness : But where God doth begin the good work of Grace in any , he openeth their eyes, *Alt. 26. 18.* he illuminateth their understandings, *Heb. 10. 32.* he causeth the darkness to pass away, and the true light to shine into them, *I Job. 2. 8.* by which light he doth discover to them the odious nature of sin, his own infinite excellencies and perfections, and the excellency of the wayes of holiness, which lead unto life and happiness, beyond the wayes of sin, which lead unto death and ruine. Some knowledge they had some of them of these things before, by the teachings of men, but it was a bare speculative, notional knowledge, which they had in their heads ; but now they are taught by the Spirit, they attain a spiritual, practical, experimental and heart-affecting knowledge of these things ; now they perceive a marvellous excellency in those things, which before seemed foolishness unto them, *I Cor. 2. 14.* they have a new eye, being anointed with the spiritual eye salve, and all things now appear with a new face ; before sin with its paint and bait, appeared beautifull and desirable ; and Christ with his Croſs and yoke, seemed rather an enemy than a friend ; they could not discern his form and comeliness, and therefore they did undervalue and neglect him ; but now they have a discovery of the hook, through the bait, and the uglineſs, through the paint of sin, and it appears most dangerous and odious unto them ; and they have a discovery of the loveliness of Christs face, and the easiness of Christs yoke, and he appears unto them most precious and desirable. Now they behold strange things in the Law, which they never before did apprehend ; in that glaſs they

they have a view given them of the monstrous nature of sin, of the pollutions which it hath brought upon their souls : there they have a prospect of Hell, and the dreadfull miseries which are the issue and product of sin. And they behold also wonderful and glorious things in the glass of the Gospel, there they have a discovery of the great and wonderful Salvation which Christ hath purchased for them, of the riches and freeness of Gods love unto them , of that glorious inheritance in Heaven which the Lord hath promised and prepared for them : They see things now in another manner than ever they did before , so that they wonder at their own former blindnes and sottishness, and at other mens present folly and madness, that they should set their hearts upon the toyes and trifles of the World, that they should wallow like Swine in the mire of sin, and drudge on contentedly and so securely in Sathans Chains towards Hell ; whilst in the mean time they neglect God, and Christ, and their Salvation , trampling under foot those inestimable riches and treasures, which in the Gospel are proffered so freely unto them.

2. In the good work of Grace, the will is rectified and put in order. The will is the great Spring-wheel as it were of the soul, which while it is out of course, all the other inferiour faculties, like so many little wheels depending upon it, must needs be disordered and distempered in their motions; but when once the will is rectified, then the whole soul is brought into frame. The will is the Queen-Regent which bears great sway , and in graceless persons is exceedingly corrupt and depraved,

praved, and employeth all the powers that are under her for the fulfilling and satisfaction of her base and filthy lusts. The thoughts, the fancy, the memory, the inferiour affections of the soul, the senses and members of the body, are at the beck of the will, to be employed in the service and as instruments of sin : when the will is changed, the work of Grace is effected, and not before ; when this Fort-Royal is taken, then Christ entreth and taketh possession. In the work of Grace there is a change in the will in regard of its inclination and complacency ; gracious persons have new inclinations, they like what before they disliked, not only by a bare approbation of their understandings, but also by a complacency of their wills in it : they dislike and disrelish what before they liked and delighted themselves in ; not only because of the checks and upbraiding of their conscience, but through an aversion of their wills unto it. As the world appears to their understandings to be vain and empty, sin to be most odious and ugly, Christ to be most beautiful and lovely ; the grace of God here, and the enjoyment of him hereafter, to be their chiefest felicity ; so are the inclinations of their wills, accordingly carried forth towards these objects. Their wills dislike the world for their portion and chief good, and therefore renounce it upon that account ; they dislike sin, not only because of the punishment threatened unto it, but also because of the innate filthiness which is in it : their wills like Christ not only as a Saviour to deliver them from Hell, but also to deliver them from sin ; they like his bloud to purifie their hearts, as well as to pacifie Gods anger,

anger, and their own consciences ; they like his person and beauty, as well as his portion and benefits ; they like him not only with his Crown, but also with his Cross ; with poverty, disgrace, and shame here, as well as with treasures and glory in the other world ; they like Gods favour beyond the favour of men, or life it self. And according to their inclination, so is their end or design ; namely, the glory of God here, and the enjoyment of God for ever ; this doth swey them chiefly, and is the design which they are carrying on in the world ; and therefore their wills do make choice of suitable means, even such as the Word doth discover and direct for the attainment of this end ; accordingly also are the purposes and resolutions of their wills suitable unto their end and choice , for the aviding of hindrances, and making use of furtherances.

3. In the work of grace the Fancy is renewed, though not in whole, yet in part ; much of the frothiness and vanity thereof is hereby corrected ; it is more ready to receive impressions of good : it is more useful unto the sanctified mind , and more readily subservient unto the sanctified will than it was before.

4. In the good work of Grace the conscience also is renewed ; it is awakened at first to prepare the soul for this work, and it is afterwards kept awake and tender, so as to check and keep from sin , *How can I do this wickednesß and sin against God ? How can I spill again the bloud of my Saviour ? grieve and drive away my Comforter ?*

5. In the good work of Grace the memory is renewed, though not strengthned beyond its natural

ral capacity, in the keeping and recollecting things committed to it ; yet in the work of Grace it is in some measure sanctified, and cleansed from that mud and filth of the world and vanity which like a sieve it before retained, and is now made a treasury of heavenly things chiefly.

6. In the good work of Grace the affections are renewed, the Love and hatred, the Desire and Flight, the Grief and Delight, the Hope and Fear, and the Anger ; all the liking affections do follow the inclination of the will, and are carried forth towards God and Christ, and Holiness here and Happiness hereafter ; and the disliking affections are carried forth towards that which is offensive unto God, and destructive to the Soul. Thus in brief concerning the subject of the good work of Grace, and the several faculties renewed and changed in this gracious change.

S E C T. III.

3. Concerning the Author of this Good Work,
C and that is God.

b1. Negatively. 1. Grace doth not grow in the Garden of Nature, there being no seed of it to be found therein ; It is neither a natural power, such as that of the Understanding, Will, Conscience, Memory, Affections, which are to be found in all the children of *Adam* by Nature ; neither is it con-natural, such as original Righteousness was in *Adam* before his Fall ; neither is it an habit acquired by the multiplicity of acts, whereof there are

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some dispositions in Nature, such as the habits of Arts and Sciences, and moral Virtues. Grace is a pure stream, which cannot spring forth from the polluted fountain of Nature; for as *Job 14. 4.* *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* You never saw Figs grow upon Thorns, nor Grapes upon Thistles; the souls of all the fallen children of men being wholly corrupt and depraved with original sin; it is impossible that this Good Work should be effected by the power of Nature. Some by the strength of natural power, cultivated by education and learning, may attain much knowledge in the mysteries of Nature, and by studying the Scriptures they may attain a notional knowledge of Divine Mysteries, but the excellency of these mysteries is hid from them, they still remain without the spiritual discerning of the things of the spirit, without the teachings of the spirit, *1 Cor. 2. 14.* Natural men may through observance and diligence attain a great accomplishment as to many moral Virtues, and hereby shine with some kind of lustre in darker parts of the World; but by no natural power or industry can they attain unto any truly sanctifying and saving Grace: the stream cannot be raised up to a greater heighth than the spring doth lye from whence it doth arise, and that which is natural, cannot by any natural power be elevated unto that which is supernatural.

2. It is not from any innate power in the Word and Ordinances to effect this good work of Grace in the soul of any; Indeed the Word is an instrument, and the Ordinances are means of Grace; but they are only instruments and means, which have no virtue and efficacy in themselves, except they

they receive it immediately from God the efficient cause of this Work ; they are but channels, not the fountain of Grace ; the Word is a Sword, but Gods hand must draw it forth, and strike with it that it may wound : there was no virtue in the waters, *Job. 5.* to heal, unless the Angel did trouble them ; and there is no virtue in Ordinances, to change and sanctifie the soul, unless the Spirit doth move in them, and work by them : The Word in it self is dead ; it is the Spirit that quickneth it, and quickneth by it. All the arguments which Ministers may draw out of the Word in preaching, though pressed with never so much earnestness and affection, cannot possibly produce this gracious change of themselves, unless God set in with the Word, and set it home upon the heart : We may as easily with our breath tear hard rocks to pieces, and bend great barrs of Iron, as by our preaching break the stony hearts, and bend the iron sinews in the necks of the impenitent. We may as easily with one finger lift a mountain, and toss it up to Heaven, or with a whisper raise those which are dead in their graves, as lift a carnal heart towards God, and raise such as are spiritually dead, unless the Lord doth accompany the Word which we preach with the Holy Ghost from Heaven ; *1 Pet. 1. 12.* If we bring the Light before a carnal man, a hard-hearted sinner, open it in his face, and tell him never so convincingly of his sin, his guilt, the curse of the Law, the wrath of God, the damnation of Hell, and what dreadful torments in his sinful courses he is hasting unto ; yet he is insensible and secure, and not moved at all unless with anger against the Minister that reproves and fore-

forewarns him of his danger, and notwithstanding all that can be said, he resolutely goeth on in this way, which will certainly, and may suddenly bring him to Hell: or if he tremble a little with *Felix*, if some slavish fear of punishment do for the present arise in him, through the impression of Arguments upon natural conscience; yet however he hear sin aggravated, as it reflecteth dishonour upon God, and defileth his own soul, he is not moved unto the least true godly evangelical mourning and sorrow for it. Let us set forth God in his glorious excellencies and perfections before such a sinner, in his infinite greatness, power, holiness, wisdom, goodness, truth, faithfulness, mercy, loving kindness; yet we cannot persuade him to fear God filially, to desire him truly, to love him entirely, to make choice of him for his chief good here, and portion eternally. Let us set forth the Lord Jesus Christ in his beauty and transcendent loveliness, in his mercy and incomparable grace and love; let us speak to him never so undeniably of the great need which he bath of Christ to be his Saviour, because he is a sinner, and by sin in such danger; let us call upon him never so earnestly, entreat him never so pathetically, to leave his sin, and to accept of Christ so freely tendered unto him; Not he! he holds fast his sin, shuts his ear like the deaf Adder, who will not hear the voice of the charmer, though he charm never so wisely, and when he harbours base lusts in his heart which will destroy him, he shuts the door against Jesus Christ, although he might have pardon and salvation, grace and glory with him. Let us propound to him never so clearly the grounds of Faith, let us direct him, invite

invite him, perswade him to believe with the greatest Scripture encouragement, and yet as easily may we perswade him to lift up the Earth in his armes, as put forth the least true act of Faith. Let us commend to him the wayes of God with the highest Elogiums, and call him into those wayes with the most powerfull motives of peace, satisfaction, sweetnes, advantage here, and happiness to Eternity, and yet nothing will prevail with him to set one step into that path. Surely then there is no inherent virtue in the Word, or any arguments though never so perswasive, to effect this good work of Grace : Indeed we must urge and press arguments upon sinners, to dislwaide them from sin, and to draw them unto God, and this holy path, because God worketh upon rational creatures in a rational way ; yet all arguments are in themselves insufficient to produce this work, as we find by the different effects which the very same arguments do make on those upon whom they are urged ; some are moved, repent, and turn to God ; others are obdurate, obstinate, and continue in their impenitency and way of disobedience, whatever is said against them ; yea some more unlikely to be wrought upon, more defiled and hardened before, when also they have resisted and withholded stronger arguments, have afterwards yielded and been overcome, and fallen down before the force which hath accompanied weaker arguments ; which difference in the operation of the Word, doth plainly shew, that this work of Grace is not from the Word, however preached and pressed, but from the power of Gods Spirit. All this which hath been said, as to the Ne-

gative, doth make way and prove also the Positive.

2. Positively God alone is the Author of the good work of Grace; It is God that doth begin the work, and that doth perform it; In this work we are born again, as *Job. 3. 3.* and we are said to be both begotten of God, *Jam. 1. 18.* *Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth;* and to be born of God, *Job. 1. 13.* *Which are born, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;* *I Joh. 4. 7.* *Whosoever loveth, is born of God.* We can no more beget our selves anew, than we could beget our selves at first; it is a supernatural work, and therefore can be effected by none but God who is Almighty; who by an immediate and real influence upon the soul, doth effect a Physical change, whereby all the faculties are changed, not in regard of their essence, but in regard of their qualifications. In this work Lions are turned into Lambs, Wolves into Sheep, Stones into Flesh, yea into Children of *Abraham*; I mean, the fierce and ravenous disposition, is changed into a milde and gentle temper; the stony obdurateness is removed, and the heart as hard as the Flint before, is made soft and plyable unto the Will and Law of God: And who can do this but the God of Nature, who first formed the Spirit within a man, and who alone can new form and new molde it after his own Image? This good work is called a new Creation, *Eph. 2. 10.* *We are his workmanship, created in Jesus Christ unto good works;* *Eph. 4. 24.* *Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness:* And therefore such as have this work in them, are called new Creatures,

tures, 2 Cor. 5. 17. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new: and thence it followeth in the next verse, All things are of God, all these new things are his more immediate work; it was God alone that created all things at first, and it is God alone that can create all things anew. This work of Grace is called a Resurrection, hereby sinners are quickned out of their Spiritual death, Eph. 2. 1. It is God that giveth Natural life, and he alone can give Spiritual life; he did raise up Christ from the dead on the third day, and he will raise up all that are dead at the last day, and he only can raise up the soul when dead in sin, and quicken it by his Spirit, which requireth the same power as was put forth in Christs Resurrection, as appears Eph. 1. 19, 20. compared with Eph. 2. 5. God indeed maketh use of the Word, in the quickning and changing of the soul; but the Word doth effect this work only instrumentally, God doth work it efficiently; as there went forth a power with Christs Word, when he called and raised Lazarus from the dead, Joh. 11. 42, 43. so the power of Gods Spirit, doth go forth with the Word of his Grace, to quicken dead souls, and effect a gracious change within them.

S E C T. IV.

¶ **W**hy the Lord doth begin this good work
of Grace in any of the Children of
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men: The reason as to the motive, is only Gods free Grace and Love; The reason as to the design and end, is partly that God might be glorified by them upon Earth, partly that they might be prepared for Glory with him for ever in Heaven.

1. The motive which induceth God to begin this good work in any of the Children of men, is only his free Grace and Love; It is a gracious work of God, not only in regard of the Grace which it doth effect, but also in regard of the Grace from whence it doth proceed: It is according to the good pleasure of Gods will, that God doth choose us, *Eph. 1. 5.* and it is according to the good pleasure of his will, that he doth change us, *Jam. 1. 18.* Natural Agents in producing effects, act necessarily; God is a voluntary Agent, and in this work doth act freely, *Eph. 2. 4, 5.* *God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickned us together with Christ:* *Rom. 9. 15.* *For he saith unto Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and compassion on whom I will have compassion.* If God hide the mysteries of Salvation from the wise and prudent, suffering them to remain in a dark and unconverted Estate, and revealeth these mysteries unto Babes; If he doth choose and call the foolish, mean, and most despised persons, and put his image and likeness upon them, we must needs say, that nothing but free Grace could move him hereunto, and with our Saviour acknowledge, *Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight,* *Mat. 11. 26.* And not only when the most unlikely persons, the ignorant or

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notoriously wicked are graciously changed, must we cry out *Grace, Grace* unto it : but also who-ever they be , however morally qualified before conversion, there is not the least merit in such of this work, nothing to move or incline God unto it, no previous disposition in the nature of any unto this gracious change ; and therefore it is onely of free grace, that such who have escaped the more gross pollutions which are in this world through lust, are washed by the Spirit in the Laver of regeneration from the inward pollutions of their hearts from which none are free. See Tit. 3. 4, 5. *But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared. Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy Ghost,* And 2 Tim. 1. 9. *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace.*

2. The design and end why God doth begin the good work of Grace in any of the children of men, is,

1. That hereby they might be fitted for his service, and glorifie his name upon the earth. All graceless persons are not onely children of wrath, but children of disobedience ; they are children of darkness and of the Devil , yea, they are his servants, they serve the Devil and divers lusts, and their whole life is a continual offence and provocation of God, a continued course of rebellion against him and his laws ; the Lord doth therefore bring some of the children of men out of a state of nature into a state of grace, that he might have some servants in the world, some to bear his name and stand

up for his honour and interest, and oppose the sins of the times and places wherein they live ; that he might have some service from them, *Heb. 12. 28.*

Let us have Grace that we may serve God acceptably ; without a work of Grace upon the heart, and a sanctified principle within, no services are acceptable unto God ; for they that are in the flesh cannot please God, Rom. 8. 8.

2. That hereby they might be fitted for glory with God for ever in Heaven ; God doth give Grace here, to prepare for glory hereafter; onely the pure in heart are fit and have the promise of seeing God, *Mat. 5. 8.* without a new heart and life, there will be no admission into the new *Jerusalem, Rev. 21. 27.* God is glorious in holiness, clothed with majesty, all brightness, perfect purity, the high and holy one of *Israel* who inhabiteth eternity, without the least spot, and with whom dwelleth no iniquity ; the Heavens are not pure in his sight, and he hath charged his Angels with folly ; the pure Seraphims proclaim his holiness, and vail their faces before the splendor thereof : And this God who is so infinitely pure and holy himself, doth infinitely hate and detest sin ; there is an infinite contrariety between the holy nature of God, and the unholy nature of man, and therefore they cannot live together with eternal delight in heaven, unless the nature of man be changed by the renewing Grace of God ; God will not permit unsanctified persons to approach so near to his glorious presence, he will not receive such defiled creatures into the dearest and closest embracements of his infinite and eternal love ; and whilst they are unrenewed, Heaven (which is a place of holiness, whose

whose company and employments are all holy) would be so unsuitable unto their natures, that they could not find sweetness and delight there, because none can delight in any thing except it have a suitableness unto their nature; therefore the Lord doth change the nature of such here in a work of Grace, whom he intendeth for eternal glory in the other world.

S E C T. V.

The Application followeth.

Use 1. Try your selves whether this good work of Grace be begun in you; you have seen many works of men before you; see whether this work of God be wrought in you; you have read of the work of Grace, and you have heard of the work of Grace, and you have seen the effects of the work of Grace, in others; search whether you can find the marks of this work in your selves.

1. If the good work be begun in you, God hath wrought you to a sense of your lost estate, whilst in a state of Nature; God hath opened your eyes to perceive your guilt of sin, and hath stopped your mouths as to any plea or excuse, and he hath awaked your conscience to a sense of your danger, and that of everlasting ruine, whilst under the guilt of any unpardoned sin. The Law hath told you, *that the soul that sinneth shall die, Ezek. 18.4.*

Conscience hath told you that you have sinned, and the Spirit hath made the conclusion, that therefore you shall die. The Law hath told you, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them*, Gal. 3. 10. Conscience hath told you, that you have neither continued nor done those things which are written in the Law, but have broken it in such a point by profaneness, in such a point by uncleanness, in such a point by drunkenness, and in such a point by unrighteousness, and in every point by some way or other disobedience; and the Spirit then hath made the application, that therefore you are cursed. The Gospel hath told you, *that except ye repent, ye shall perish*, Luke 13. 3. Conscience hath told you, that you have not repented, and the Spirit hath thence inferred, that you shall perish. The Gospel hath told you, *That he that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him*, John 3. 18, 36. Conscience hath told you, that you have not believed, and the Spirit hath applied it, therefore you are condemned, and the wrath of God abideth upon you. The Gospel hath told you, *That Christ will come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that obey not his Gospel, and that he will punish them with everlasting destruction*. 2 Thes. 1. 8, 9. Conscience hath told you, that you have not obeyed the Gospel, and God by his Spirit hath drawn the conclusion; Therefore Christ will come in flaming fire to take vengeance upon you, and everlasting to destroy you in Hell for your disobedience. Thus when the Lord doth begin the good work, he doth convince the sinner of his sin, and his liableness to the stroke of his vengeance, and works him to a sense

of his lost estate, so that he cryes out, O wretched man that I am ! I have sinned, and woe be to me, I must die, and that eternally ! I must perish, and that everlastinglly ! the course which I take will ere long bring me to Hell ; I have been treasuring up sin, and God hath been treasuring up wrath for me ; I have been pursuing of iniquity, and God is pursuing me with his vengeance ; I have been taking pleasure in sin, I have been merry, and frolick, and secure, and have put the evil day far from me ; but pain and horrour doth abide for me, and the evil day is drawing near to me, it hastneth greatly; the day of wrath and vengeance , the day of accounts, when I must be judged, and condemned, and punished in flames of everlasting fire for my sins ; and who can stand in that day ? who can endure Gods fierce anger ? who can dwell with devouring fire ? now woe be to me that ever I was born ! Have you had such a sense as this of your lost estate wrought in you by God ?

2. If the good work of grace be begun in you, God hath wrought you to an earnest enquiry what to do to get out of this estate ; Thus the Jews who had embrewed their hands in the blood of Christ, afterwards they are *pricked in their hearts, and cry out, men and brethren what shall we do ?* Act. 2. 37. Thus the Jaylor after he had scourged the Apostles, and thrust their persons into the inner prison, and their feet into the stocks, he is by the earth-quake struck with a trembling, and crys out, *Sirs what must I do to be saved ?* Act. 16. 30. when God giveth a sense of their lost estate unto sinners, in order to a gracious change, he doth not suffer them to abide them, but he stirreth them up to seek after a remedy,

dy, and a way for recovery out of that estate, and for the prevention of their future misery; some indeed lose their convictions, and cast off their troubles, and either shut their ears against the clamours of their accusing Conscience, or some way or other stop the mouth of Conscience that they may not be molested by it; but God will not permit this to be in those whom he will bring home effectually to himself; he followeth them with a light in one hand, to shew them their sins, and with a sword in the other, to take vengeance upon them; he meets them as the Angel did *Balaam*, wheresoever they turn, and lets them know, if they will venture to go on in that way they shall be slain; and then they begin to bethink themselves, and to make enquiry of others, how they may do to escape; and if they could find help in any creature, they would go no further; if they could find any righteousness of their own to present God withall, they would take up with that; but God convinceth them, that they can bring nothing to him which can find any acceptance with him; and this puts them to a great loss, especially such as are unacquainted with the Gospel, and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ; but withal they are the more effectually prepared for a ready closure with Jesus Christ, when he is made known and freely tendered unto them. Have you ever had such solicitousness and made such earnest enquiries after the way of getting out of your lost estate?

3. If God have begun the good work in you, he hath wrought you unto a grief and hatred of sin; and in working of this, God doth discover not only the mischief and misery which sin will bring upon the sinner, but also his love and tender mercy

mercy in his Son, and readiness to forgive and save ; and this doth most kindly melt and mollifie the heart, when the sinner perceiveth that the offended God is ready to be reconciled, and hath been at great cost, even the expence of his Sons blood, to make provision for his Salvation ; hereby he is wrought unto the most bitter grief for sin, and to the greatest loathing and detestation of sin, beyond all other things in the world : Now he cryes out more of his sin, than his punishment ; and he did not before entertain sin with more readiness, than now he doth reject it with abhorrency ; and he desirereth not more to be saved from Hell, than to be saved from sin.

4. If God have begun the good work in you, he hath wrought you unto hungering desires after Jesus Christ ; when sin becomes most odious to the sinner, then Christ becomes most precious ; when sin is bitter, then Christ is sweet ; when sin is burdensome, and the burden intollerable, then Christ is desirable, who alone can remove this burden : It is the sense of sickness, which puts the diseased person upon sending for the Physician ; and the sense of the sickness of sin, doth draw forth desires after Christ, the great Soul-Physician ; then none but Christ, none but Christ is the breath of the desire ; O that Christ would come unto me ! O that Christ would undertake for me ! O that I could have a sight of him ! O that I could meet with him ! O that I had an interest in him ! Lord give me an interest in thy Son ! thou hast given him for sinners, I am a sinner, give him unto me ! None have more need of him, O do not deny him ! deny me any thing, but deny me not Christ ! give me Christ and

I have enough ! give me Christ and I have all ! give me Christ, or else I dye, I perish eternally ! Have you had such breathings of desire after Jesus Christ, and that to sanctifie you, as well as to save you ? to heal you, as well as to reconcile you ? then be sure the work is begun.

5. If God hath begun the good work in you, he hath wrought Faith in you to lay hold on Christ ; God holdeth forth his bleeding Son, to the broken and bleeding-hearted sinner, and by his Spirit he draweth him unto him , and by his Almighty power, against the opposition of Sathan and the Flesh, enableth him, quitting all other holds, to lay hold on Christ ; he is taken off his own bottom, and builds all his hopes upon this rock ; he renounceth his own righteousness, and accepts of the perfect righteousness which in Christ is provided for him, and tendered to him ; and hereby alone he looketh for remission of sin , and acceptation with the Father ; and if he cannot presently arrive unto a confidence of his Salvation, yet he ventures himself upon Christ, and resolveth if he perish, he will perish endeavouring at least to trust in him. Can you experience such a work of Faith as this is ?

6. If God hath begun the good work in you, then he hath wrought your hearts unto the love of himself ; when the sinner hath attained union unto Christ by Faith, this Faith doth put forth it self in the acts of most sincere and supreme love and affection unto God : Now God is made choice of as the chief good , and the highest room in the heart is given unto him ; the believer hath love for other things, but God is loved in all, God is loved

above all ; he loveth him for his Son, and he loveth him for himself ; he loveth him for his loveliness, and he loveth him for his love ; he loveth also his Image wherever he seeth it ; he loveth not only his goodness and mercy, but also his holiness and purity ; and not only that which is in his person, but also that which is written in his Law, and that which is engraven, though more imperfectly, upon his Children. Have you such a love to God !

7. If God hath begun to good work in you, then he hath wrought your heart unto a contempt of the world ; The world appeareth to the beleiver, to be a windy vanity in separation from God, and a vain empty nothing in comparison with God ; all earthly things in themselves are to him like a feather without weight, like a shadow without substance, like a breast without milk, like a cloud without rain, like a vapour which appears for a little while, and soon vanisheth away, and therefore he will not set his eyes and heart upon such things which are not what they seem to be, and are taking the wing so soon to be gon, and cease to be what they are ; his eyes are upon a better and more enduring substance in comparison with which he esteemeth the world as a toy. Is the world thus brought down in your esteem.

8. And lastly , If God have begun the good work in you , then he hath wrought you unto a self-resignation , and self-dedication unto him ; Believers look upon themselves as no longer their own, having made over themselves unto God, and devoted themselves unto his service ; other Lords have had dominion over them, sin hath reigned, and the

the Devil hath tyrannized; but now they are made free from sin, and delivered from the power of Satan, and have yielded up themselves unto God, to give ready obedience unto whatsoever he revealeth to be his will and command. Examine yourselves in these particulars, and you may know by this way of Gods working, whether the good work be begun in you.

S E C T. VI.

Use 2. **O** Ther Uses might be made of this point, but I shall add but this one, which is, a Use of Exhortation unto all that are without this good work, especially to you that are young, that now in the beginning of your life you would endeavour that this good work of Grace may be begun in you: I am glad to see so many of your faces together here on Earth, I should rejoice more to see all your faces in Heaven; I am glad to see you together in this house, I should more rejoice to see you all in Gods family: God hath blessed my Ministry in the conversion of some amongst you, and the good work of Grace hath been begun in you by a most unworthy and most unlikely instrument; O that my Ministry might be further blessed in the conversion of the rest that are unconverted! O that I might be an instrument to begin the good work of Grace in the heart of every graceless young man, and graceless young woman in this place! God by his providence hath brought you to hear, O that by his

his spirit he would work and perswade you to repent and believe! you are now under the dews of Gods word, O that you might be under the influences of his Grace! that whilst the seed of the word is sowing in your ears, that the seed of Grace might be thrown into your hearts; O that God would speak to you! that whilst his Minister is speaking to you audibly, that God would speak to you feelingly, and say, here's Grace for you young man, and here's Grace for you young woman; here's Repentance for thee sinner, and here's Faith for thee unbeliever; here's Light and Eyes for thee that art Blind, here's Life and quickning for thee that art Dead; Dead in Sins and Trespasses. O that you might hear Gods thundering voice, to awaken you that are asleep in sin, and then his still and sweeter voice to allure you to his Son. Some of you though you are but young men and women, yet ye are old Sinners; you have strong bodies, but you have stronger lusts; some of you are not only Apprentices unto men, but you are Apprentices unto the Devil, and have been bound to him ever since you were born; you have served some of you twice, thrice seven years, it is well if none here have served the Devil and their own lusts seven times seven years; and is it not time to be made free? can you be well pleased with this Service which is so base a vassalage? can you like the Devil for your Master? can you love those bonds which enslave your souls, your most noble and excellent part, and by which the Devil is leading you unto Hell? The Devil ruleth over, and worketh in all you that are children of disobedience; and is it not better to have Christ rule over, and God by his spirit to work in you, when

when Christ's service is perfect freedom ; and God's work is the good work of Grace? Who knows but this may be the time and place wherein some captive souls may be made free, and rescued by Christ out of the snares of Satan? and *if the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed*, Joh. 8.36. Who knows but whilst I am speaking to you, God may be working in you, and if God will work, who can let? Satan shall not let, Sin shall not let, the World shall not let. God may now create the fruit of the lips Grace, Grace : God can make the stoutest Sinner to tremble, and the proudest Sinner to stoop; he can break the hardest Rock, and bow the iron Sinew ; he can melt and soften the most obdurate heart ; O that he would put forth his almighty arm, and lay hold upon your hearts, and overturning the strong holds of his enemies within you, that he would bring you into captivity and obedience to his Son! Young ones, look up to God for a gracious change now : some of you are desirous to change your condition, look up to God to change your natures : some of you are looking out for new houses, O that you would look up to God for new hearts! there are many that say, who will shew us any good? do you say, Lord thou hast shewn us what is good, do thou work in us this good, this good work of Grace.

1. Consider the necessity of it.

1. Without this good work of Grace, you have no good in you, darkness you have instead of light, deformity instead of beauty, filthiness instead of purity, love of the world instead of love to God, the fire of lust instead of the fire of zeal for God's glory.

2. With-

2. Without this good work of Grace, no good can be done by you ; you can do nothing but sin, without a sanctified principle of Grace ; without life there can be no vital operations, and without Grace there can be no gracious actions ; if there be no good in the root, there can be no good in the fruit ; and if there be no good in the heart, there can be no good in the life ; they that are in the flesh, cannot please God, *Rom. 8. 8.*

3. Without this good work of Grace, no good doth belong unto you ; there are many high and excellent privileges, many sweet and precious promises belong unto the gracious, election, adoption, remission, salvation, audience of Prayer ; and *all things shall work together for the good of those that love God, and are called according to his purpose,* *Rom. 8. 28.* But if you are without the good work of Grace, you cannot lay claim to any Gospel-privilege, to any Gospel-promise ; instead of being the Children of God, you are the Children of the Devil ; instead of the pardon of sin, your guilt doth still remain ; instead of audience of Prayer, your Prayers are an abomination ; instead of all things working together for your good, all things work together for your hurt.

4. Without this good work of Grace, there is no good laid up for you ; God hath laid out much for his people, but he hath laid up more, *Psal. 31. 19. O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee ! 1 Cor. 2. 9. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* God hath set forth these things by treasures, joyes, crowns, an exceeding

and eternal weight of glory ; yet when all is said, these things do exceed all comparison, and all comprehension : But without the good work, none of these things are prepared and laid up for you ; treasures indeed are laid up for you, but they are treasures of wrath ; a portion is prepared, but fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest will be this portion ; there will be no admission for you into Heaven without Grace, and then I need not tell you, that you must take up your lodging for ever amongst Devils , in the unquenchable flames of Hell.

2. Consider the excellency of this work ; It is an excellent work, which requires so excellent a worker to effect it, and that is God, who worketh it by the immediate influence of his Spirit ; It is an excellent work, which doth so enoble the Spirit of man , which doth so beautifie the Soul, which is the renewing of Gods lost Image, which is the engraving of Gods Spirit ; It is an excellent work, which doth furnish the heart, and make it fit to be an habitation for God by his Spirit, which brings the Creature into fellowship with the Father and the Son ; It is an excellent work, which is Heaven begun, Glory in the bud, Happiness in the first-fruit, the Inheritance in the earnest-peny ; and which doth qualifie for, as well as is the beginning of eternal life.

3. Consider that this good work of Grace is attainable, and that by you , whosoever you be, though never so mean in parts, though ignorant and unlearned ; in condition, though poor, and you have no land or money ; though never so vile and great sinners , though you have no righteousness

ness or merit, except it be of death and hell, yet since Grace is free, and God giveth it freely, without respect of persons, or any thing in persons; any of you are capable of it, and it is attainable by you.

4. Consider, it is the most seasonable time for you to get Grace whilst you are young, now God is most ready to give it; you will be most ready to receive it, before your conscience is grown more seared, your hearts more hardened, your lusts more strengthened, before you are more entangled in the world, more defiled with sin, more captivated by the Devil; few that refuse the professors of grace when they are young, do accept of it when they are old. Now is the accepted time, the day of Life may be at an end, or the day of Grace may be at an end before you are aware. Delay no longer; Hearken to the present Call; Take a view of your sins in the Glass which God holds forth unto you; Look upwards to the frowns of God upon you; look inwards to the wounds of conscience within you; look forward to Death and Judgment, which are hastening towards you; and look downward to the Punishment of Hell, which is preparing for you, except you repent and turn to the Lord. Labour for a fence of your danger, and a feeling of sin's power, and a loathing of sin's defilement; And then look to Christ, who alone can save you from misery, and save you from your iniquity, and lay hold on him; in your endeavour God may work and help you to repent and believe; and if once this good work were begun in you, you would not be without it for ten thousand worlds; be sure then you should not perish, nor

miss of everlasting happiness, because he that hath begun the Good Work will perform it, till the day of Christ, which leads to the second Doctrine.

SECT. VII.

The Good Work Performed.

Doct. 2. *That the Good Work which God doth begin in the day of Grace, he will perform untill the day of Christ.*

IN handling of this point, I shall speak, 1. Concerning the day of Grace, wherein God doth begin the Good Work. 2. Concerning Gods performing this Good Work which he doth begin. 3. Concerning the day of Christ; untill which God will perform the Good Work. 4. Prove that God will perform the Good Work untill the day of Christ. 5. Answer some Objections. 6. Make some Application.

1. Concerning the day of Grace, wherein God doth begin the Good Work. By the day of Grace we are to understand any time in this life wherein the Lord doth make proffers of Grace, wherein he doth call sinners to repentance, and invite them unto his Son, that they might attain remission and salvation by him: I say this day of Grace is any time of this life, and this life only; for there is no day

day of Grace in the other life ; there is a day of glory for the gracious, but no day of grace for sinners ; there is a day of wrath for sinners, but no day of grace ; the day of grace for sinners is only in this Life , whilst they have the means of grace ; which is called the accepted time, and the day of salvation, 2 Cor. 6. 2. In this day of grace the Lord do:h begin the Good Work in all those that belong unto the Election of Grace ; he doth not only proffer Grace, but bestow it ; in their hearing the Word of Grace, they attain the Good Work of Grace ; While God calleth them externally by the preaching of the Word, he calleth them effectually, and worketh a gracious change in them by the operations of his Spirit, and so the Good Work is begun ; of which I have spoken at Large under the first Doctrine.

2. Concerning Gods Performing the Good Work which he hath begun ; the Word in the Original is ἀπολαύειν, which signifieth to finish, to bring to perfection ; it includeth Gods carrying on the good Work of Grace, so as that it shall never quite fail, nor those that have it totally fall from it.

3. Concerning the Day of Christ, untill which God will perform the good Work of Grace which he hath begun. The Day of Christ sometimes in Scripture is taken for the day of his bodily presence with his Disciples here on Earth, which is past : and though he foretelleth his Disciples that they should after his departure desire one of those dayes of his bodily presence with them, to comfort them under their afflictions, which for his sake they should endure , yet that no such day should be

seen by them, Luk. 17. 22. *And he said unto his Disciples, the dayes will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the dayes of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.* But the day of Christ here spoken of, is the day which is to come, not that which is past; it is the day of the second appearance of Christ, in his glory, not the day of his first appearance in a state of humiliation: It is the last day, when the Lord Jesus will come down from Heaven to judge the whole world; God will perform the good Work of Grace which he hath begin in the gracious, until this day of Christ's appearance; not as if then their grace should fail, but then it shall arrive unto its full perfection, and lodge them safely in the arms of their Saviour, and in the eternal embracements of his Love. It is through Gods performance of this Good Work, begun in his people, that they will be blameless in the Day of Christ, and that they will be qualified for a reception into habitations of everlasting blessedness, 1 Cor. 1. 8. *Who shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ,* 1 Thes. 5. 23. *And the very God of peace sanctifie you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

S E C T. VIII.

4. **T**He fourth particular, and the chief, which I shall speak unto, is to prove that God will

will perform the Good Work which he hath begun, untill the Day of Christ; that he will never suffer Grace begun, to fail till it arrive unto perfection; That truly gracious persons shall persevere unto the end, and never finally nor totally fall away.

Before I come to the proof of the point, I shall premise a few things for the better understanding thereof.

1. Concerning the Good Work which God will perform, and not suffer quite to fail, I am speaking of the Work it self, of Grace, not of the preparatives to it, such as conviction, contrition, some kind of trouble for sin, and the like, which many may have, and totally lose them, so as never to regain them any more. 2. I am speaking of the good work of grace in the truth of it, not of the counterfeit work, which too many hypocrites have and may totally fall from. 3. I am speaking of the special work of Grace, not of the common gifts and illuminations, and spiritual tafts which may be given by the Spirit unto some who are unsound, from which they may totally Apostatize into the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, so as never to be renewed again unto repentence.

2. Concerning Gods performing of the good work: 1. I dont say, that the gracious themselves can perform it, but that if they should be left to themselves, they would fall away both totally and finally: But God hath undertaken to perform it, and to help them from falling away, and he will do it. 2. I dont say, that God will perform this

good work in any, in their neglect of the means for their establishment and perseverance, and in any licentious course which they may take ; but he will perform it in their diligent use of the means by him appointed, and their refraining sin, which if [they should indulge themselves in , they would be cut off from his favour, and bring unavoidable and eternal death upon themselves, *Rom. 8. 13. If ye live after the flesh, ye shall dye ;* it is spoken by the Apostle unto the believing *Romans.*

3. Concerning the failing of the good work :
 1. I dont say, but the work of Grace begun, may fail in regard of the vigorous exercise of it ; such acts may at some times be suspended : Neither
 2. That the habits of Grace may not fail, in regard of some degrees of strength ; gracious persons may be under declinings and decays of Grace , (of which more when I come to the Caution) but the habits of Grace shall never wholly fail ; the life doth remain in the root, when the fruit falleth off, and few leaves do remain. Having premised these things, I come now to the proof, that God will perform the good work of Grace which he hath begun, or that true Grace shall never quite fail, nor true Saints ever totally fall from Grace : And this will appear , 1. From Gods Election and Calling of them ; 2. From Gods Covenant and Promise to them.

1. It appeareth from Gods Election and Calling of such as are gracious, that he will perform the good work which he hath begun in them, so that they shall never totally fall. God hath elected and chosen

chosen all such as are gracious, before the foundation of the world, unto eternal Salvation, by an absolute infallible immutable decree; he hath chosen them to Grace here, and Glory hereafter; and by Grace to fit them for Glory, by Holiness in this world, to fit them for Happiness in the other world; and therefore they shall never totally and finally fall from Grace, which is absolutely necessary to bring them unto Glory.

The perseverance of Saints, or the gracious, may be thus proved from Election: 1. If there be an eternal absolute and immutable decree of Election, whereby a particular number of men and women are chosen unto Salvation; 2. If all those that are particularly elected, shall infallibly and most certainly attain that Salvation which they are chosen unto; 3. If none can attain Salvation without Grace, and perseverance in Grace, but are brought unto it thereby; 4. If all the Saints, or such who have the work of Grace begun in them, are elected, or in the number of those that are chosen to Salvation, and by consequence shall certainly attain Salvation, and that by perseverance in Grace; then it must needs follow undeniably, that the Saints or gracious persons shall certainly persevere, and never totally fall from Grace; but these things are so, as I shall shew in each particular, and therefore the consequence certain.

1. There is an absolute eternal and immutable decree of Election, whereby a particular number of men and women are chosen unto Salvation; this is evident from Scripture, which speaketh of this decree before the foundation of the world, *Eph. 1. 4.*
According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation

dation of the world; and of Gods purpose of Election, before the particular persons chosen are born, without respect to their works, but only to his own will, *Rom. 9. 11, 13.* For the children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth: It was said, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. Moreover, besides this express Scripture, there is reason that Gods decree of Election should be absolute and immutable, not depending upon the mutable will of man, or any foreseen works to move him herein, because God foreseeth nothing as future but in his decree, and nothing to come to pass in time, could move Gods will before time, in so much as his will is the cause of whatever is future, and not any thing that is future the cause of Gods will, unless something that is Temporal, could be the cause of that which is Eternal, which is absurd: God knoweth from Eternity all possible things that never come to pass, but he knoweth no future things, but as he wills that they should come to pass; in so much as nothing can rationally be imagined should bring them out of the number of possible things, into the number of certain future things, but the will and decree of God; therefore Gods decree of Election must needs be absolute, certain and immutable.

2. Hence it followeth, that all those who are particularly elected, shall infallibly and most certainly attain that Salvation which they are chosen unto, otherwise Gods decree would not be certain; and it would argue weakness in God, if he should from Eternity purpose and resolve to do a thing, which he should never bring to pass; but this can-

not

not be ascribed unto God, who is infinite in power, and powerfully worketh all things according to the counsell of his will, Eph. 1. 11. God can as soon cease to be God, as not effect what he hath eternally purposed, because he would cease to be unchangeable, which is his essential property; therefore as sure as God is God, all the Elect shall be saved.

3. None can attain Salvation, without grace and perseverance therein, but are brought thereunto by it, 2 Thes. 2. 13. *But we are bound to give thanks always unto God, for you brethren, beloved of God, because God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth.* Without Faith and Sanctification, there is no possibility of attaining Salvation; God hath appointed Sanctification to be the means, without which Salvation, which is the end, cannot be attained; and not only the grace of Sanctification, is necessary to Salvation, but also perseverance in this grace to the end, Mat. 24. 13. *He that endureth to the end shall be saved;* Rev. 2. 10. *Be thou faithfull unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

4. All the Saints or gracious persons, who have the good work begun in them, are elected and in the number of those particular persons which are chosen unto Salvation; this is evident, because the grace begun in them, is the fruit of Election, Act. 13. 48. *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.* The grace of Faith is the fruit of Ordination, or Election unto eternal life; so Eph. 1. 4. *He hath chosen us that we should be holy:* therefore if any be holy, it is because they are chosen or elected; as whom God hath chosen to the end, which

which is Salvation and eternal happiness, he hath chosen also to the means, which is Sanctification and holiness : so whom he hath chosen to the means, he hath chosen to the end.

Hence then it is strongly and undeniably necessary, that gracious persons being chosen to salvation, which they shall certainly attain unto, and that by the means of grace and perseverance therein, that they shall persevere in grace to the end, and never totally and finally fall from it. I shall here add one Scripture which joyneth Election, Grace, and Glory together ; whereby will plainly appear the perseverance of the gracious. *Rom. 8. 30. Whom he did predestinate, them be also called; whom he called, them be also justified; and whom he justified, them be also glorified.* Here is the golden chain of mans salvation in the four great links of it, the first Predestination or Election ; the second Effectual calling or Vocation ; the third, Justification ; the fourth, Glorification : these God hath joyned and fastned together, and none can pluck them asunder ; some have attempted to do it, but it hath never been done, except in the fond imagination of some men : God hath here coupled and linked Predestination and Calling, then Calling and Justification, then Justification and Glorification, and they hang altogether so, that they cannot be divided ; now if true grace should quite fail, and the good work which God hath begun, might come to nothing, then one link of this chain would be broken off, and that is Effectual calling, which is no other than the good work of grace begun ; I say, Effectual calling then would be broken off from Election, or Election would be uncertain , and Gods Decree muta-

mutable; the impossibility of which, I have already proved: Moreover, Effectual calling, could true grace quite fail, would be broken off from Justification, unless God should give to such a pardon, and retract it afterwards again; be sure it would be broken off from Glorification, for they that fall from Grace, will fall short of Heaven; but the links are strong, and cannot be broken, therefore true Grace shall never quite fail.

And here I shall subjoyn one or two Arguments from effectual Calling it self, to prove that gracious persons shall never totally and finally fall. 1. Such whom God hath effectually called, he hath called to glory, *1 Thes. 2. 12. That ye would walk worthy of him who hath called you unto his Kingdom and Glory.* And as whom he effectually calleth to grace, he giveth grace, so whom he effectually calleth to glory, he will give them glory; he hath given them the beginnings of it, and he will bring those beginnings unto perfection. Moreover, 2dly, Gods gifts of Grace and effectual Calling of the Gracious, is without repentance, *Rom. 11. 29. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.* But if gracious persons shoulp totally fall from grace, Gods Gifts and Calling would not be without repentance; therefore they cannot totally fall.

S E C T. IX.

2. **T**He second chief Argument to prove that gracious persons shall never fall from the Good

Good Work begun in them, may be drawn from Gods Covenant and Promises which he hath made unto them.

1. Such as are taken into an everlasting covenant, shall never totally fall from grace: But all truly gracious persons are taken into an everlasting covenant, therefore they shall never totally fall from Grace. That gracious persons are taken into covenant, it is evident, because the grace of the covenant is wrought in them; that this covenant is everlasting, is evident, *Isa. 55. 3. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.* *Jer. 32. 40. I will make an everlasting covenant with them.* That such as are taken into an everlasting covenant, shall never totally fall from grace, is evident, because their total fall from grace would turn them out of covenant; inasmuch as it would turn them out of Gods favour, and there is no promise of the covenant doth belong to total Apostates: many threatenings but no promise, and so the covenant would not be everlasting to them, neither the mercies thereof sure mercies.

2. Such to whom God hath made sure promises of everlasting life and happiness, shall never totally fall from grace; but God hath made sure promises of everlasting life and happiness to all them that are truly gracious, therefore none that are truly gracious shall totally fall from grace. That God hath made sure promises of everlasting life and happiness, unto such as are truly gracious, is evident in the promises which he hath made to faith, *Job. 3. 16. Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.* *Act. 16. 31. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* In the

promises he hath made to love, *1 Cor. 2. 9. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what God hath prepared for them that love him.* Jam. 1. 12. *He shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised unto them that love him.* All such as are truly gracious, they have these graces of Faith and Love, and therefore the Promises of Eternal Life and happiness are made unto them; That such to whom these Promises are made, shall not totally fall from grace, is evident, because, as hath been already shewn, if they should totally fall from Grace, they would fall short of Heaven; therefore they shall not totally fall from grace.

Obj. These promises of everlasting life are made only to those that persevere in grace to the end.

Answ. I answer, 1. They are made unto all that are gracious, without exception, and so carry in them an evident proof of their perseverance. 2. God hath moreover promised Perseverance unto those that are gracious; which may be a third Argument under this head.

3. Such to whom God hath promised Perseverance, they shall never totally fall from grace; but God hath promised Perseverance unto all them that are truly gracious; therefore they shall never totally fall from grace. That such to whom God hath promised Perseverance, shall never totally fall from grace, I suppose none will deny; for however some say, God hath promised life and happiness upon the condition of perseverance, yet they cannot assign any condition upon which God doth promise perseverance, unless they make perseverance to be the condition of perseverance: and so that God will enable his people to persevere, upon the

the condition that they do persevere; and that he will keep them from falling, upon the condition that they keep themselves from falling, which is very absurd. That God hath promised perseverance to all them that are gracious, is evident in the covenant, *Ezek. 36. 37.* *And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.* Which includes a Promise, not only of enabling his people to begin to keep his statutes, but also to continue to keep them, and persevere unto the end. More plainly, *Jer. 32. 40.* *I will put my fear into their hearts, that that they shall not depart from me.* God keeps his people from falling by his power through faith, *1 Pet. 1. 5.* *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.* And he hath promised to keep their faith, and fulfill that work in them with power; which is included in the Prayer of *Paul* for the believing *Thessalonians, 2 Thes. 1. 11.* *That God would fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.* Hence then it is clearly evident, that truly gracious shall never totally fall from grace.

S E C T. X.

5. **T**He fifth thing is, to answer some objections against the Doctrine of the Saints perseverance, which may seem to prove that truly gracious persons may totally fall from the Grace begun in them.

Obj. 1.. Experience doth give in sufficient evidence of some Saints that have fallen totally, though they

they have recovered again, and not fallen finally ; and the Scripture doth witness the same, which telleth us of *Peter's* denial of his Master, and *David's* Murder and Adultery, and how could such sins be consistent with a state of Grace ? especially the last instance of *David*, who lay a long time before he recovered.

Answ. 1. True Saints and gracious persons may fall into sin, but they cannot fall from grace ; they may fall foully, but they cannot fall totally ; they may fall so as to break their bones, but they cannot fall so as to break their necks ; they may sin themselves out of the sense of Gods favour, but they never shall sin away his favour ; they may sin so as to break their peace, but they shall never sin so as to provoke God to break his Covenant ; their graces by their falls may exceedingly decay, but they never shall be quite lost.

2. As to that instance of *Peter* ; It is evident from Scripture, that though he fell into sin , and a great sin, yet he did not fall from Grace ; for our Saviour calleth him, *Luke 22. 32.* *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.* Be sure Christ's Prayer was heard ; and if *Peter's* Faith did not quite fail, at least as to the habit of it, though it were interrupted as to the exercise of it, be sure the Work of Grace in him did not quite fail.

3. The same may be said of *David*, though by his falls he lost the joys of God's salvation, yet he did not fall from a state of salvation ; though the fruit which before was brought forth by him did fal', yet the seed of Grace did still remain in him ; the mercies of *David* were sure mercies ; and although God was displeased with *David*, yet he promised he

would not utterly take away his loving kindness from him, *Psal. 89. 34.* And if he did not quite lose Gods loving kindness, surely he did not quite lose his own Grace.

Obj. 2. But some eminent Saints have fallen totally and finally too. Great Pillars in the Church have not only trembled in shaking times, but tumbled; and some starrs of Heaven have fallen to the Earth, and never recovered their station any more. The Scripture telleth us of *Demas*, who turned off from the wayes of God, being allured by the present world; of *Hymenaeus* and *Alexander*, who made shipwrack of Faith, and put away a good Conscience: of the turning away of *Phygellus* and *Hermogenes*: yea, of some that have been enlightned, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come; that yet after all, have fallen quite away into the sin against the Holy Ghost; so that it hath been impossible to renew them again to repentance.

Answ. 1. None that ever had the good Work of Grace begun in them in truth, did ever thus fall; for the reasons which out of the Scripture have been given; therefore,

2. All those that have totally and finally fallen, they never did really, but only seemingly stand; whatever pillars have tumbled, they never were built upon Christ, the sure foundation: whatever starrs have fallen, they were but comets, not real starrs, which never fall; however, the lamp of some hypocrites may seem for a while to shine as bright as others, yet they are without the oil of true Grace in the Vessel of their hearts, and no wonder then

if their lamps go out. They are hypocrites only that totally and finally fall, and it is but counterfeit, or common Grace that they fall from ; this is plain *1 John 2. 19.* Where *John* speaketh of the departure and Apostacy of some Professors, *They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us, but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.* These hypocrites which departed from the faith, seemed to be true Saints, and Disciples of Christ ; and if they had been so indeed, no doubt, that is, most certainly, they would have continued and persevered ; but by their Apostacy they gave a manifest proof of their hypocrisy. And therefore, when the Apostle had spoken of the Apostacy of *Hymenaeus*, who had not only fallen himself, but also overthrew the Faith of others ; he calleth *Timothy, 2 Tim. 2. 19.* *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.* Where God doth lay a foundation of true Grace in the hearts of any, it is sure, and cannot be overthrown ; where God doth put the Seal of his Spirit upon any, it cannot be broken : such whom God doth by his Seal mark and own for his, he will never disown them, and they shall never quite fall away.

3. As to that faith which may be made shipwreck of, and overthrown, it is not the Grace of Faith, but the Profession of Faith, and Doctrine of Faith, which in a storm of Persecution may be cast away, and renounced by some, and by strong delusions and belief of lies, may be overthrown in others.

4. As to that good conscience which may be put away,

away, it is not a truly good, and sanctified conscience, but a moral, and comparatively good conscience; such as *Paul* professeth he had whilst a Pharisee, before his conversion, this later may be put away, not the former.

5. As to those enlightnings and tafts which some may quite lose and fall away from, into the unpardonable sin, they are but common gifts of the Spirit, not special sanctifying Grace.

Obj. 3. Ezek. 18. 24. When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, &c. he shall dye.

Answ. Either the Prophet speaketh of legal righteousness, not evangelical; or of some temporal untimely death, not eternal; or as I rather think, that he speaketh only by way of supposition, which shall never come to pass. As *Rom. 8. 13. If ye live after the flesh, ye shall dye.* And yet he telleth them, that there was no condemnation to them; that nothing should separate them from the love of Christ; so that they should neither live after the flesh, nor dye, and yet it was true, that if they did live after the flesh, they should dye: So *Gal. 1. 8. If an Angel from Heaven preach another Gospel, let him be accursed.* It doth not hence follow, either that an Angel from Heaven, (however an Angel from Hell might do it) should or could preach another Gospel, he should be accursed; So when the righteous turneth from his righteousness, he shall dye; it doth not follow, that either he shall turn from his righteousness or dye; but the Lord doth make use of threatenings and cautions, as well as promises, and other eneouragements, to keep the righteous from turning from his

his righteousness, and all little enough sometimes for his establishment.

Obj. 4. This Doctrine doth open a door to licentiousness, for when any have true Grace, they may think with themselves, let them do what they will, they shall never perish, they are now out of all danger of eternal death, and wrath; and so they will be prone to indulge themselves to sin, and a looser conversation? whereas the danger of falling away would be a greater bridle and restraint upon them, to keep them from sin, and a greater spur to quicken them unto watchfulness, and constancy in holy duties.

Answ. 1. God doth threaten the Saints themselves with eternal death and wrath, if they turn from his wayes, unto a vicious conversation, and no doubt but they would perish, should they do it. *Rom. 8. 13.*

2. The Saints know that sin, if they presume to commit it, will at least break their peace, and rob them of their comfort, and make havock of their Grace; therefore they fear to sin.

3. The promises of perseverance do secure the gracious, not only from falling into Hell, but also from falling into a course of Sin; and by those promises they are strengthned and enabled to stand, when others for want of the help of them do fall.

4. Such as grow licentious upon presumption of their perseverance, it is a great symptome of their hypocrisy, and such are like to fall quite away.

5. Such as are truly gracious, are more ingenuous, and have more love to their heavenly Father, than to presume to sin against him, and to fly in his face, because he hath promised he will not dis inherit them.

6. As Sin is opposite to Grace, so Grace is opposite to Sin, and the more encouragement Grace hath, the more vigorous will it be in its opposition to Sin; and experience doth tell us, that such gracious persons as have an assurance of Gods love and perseverance, they are so far from taking occasion hereby for licentiousness, that of all others they they prove the most strict walking Christians.

S E C T. XI.

The Application.

Use I. Establish your selves in the belief of this doctrine, That God will perform and perfect the good work of Grace which he hath begun, that the truly gracious shall persevere to the end, and never either totally or finally fall; and take heed of entertaining that error which is contrary unto this great truth, that hath so clear and sure a foundation in the Scripture. Such as hold, that the Saints may fall away, do deny what is express in the Text, that God will perform the good work begun, untill the day of Christ; for how doth God perform the work, if the work cease, and they fall from Grace? Suth persons do in effect say, that Gods decrees are uncertain, that his love is changeable, that his Covenant may be broken, that his Word is untrue, his Promise deceitfull; that his Sons death might be in vain; his Sons prayers and intercession might be ineffectual; that Christs members might be torn off from his body, and thrown into Hell; that Christs Sheep might be lost, so as never any more to be found; that such whom Christ hath loved and espoused, may be divorced, hated, and at length

length found amongst the damned ; that the Holy Spirit might be quite expelled from his habitation, and the Devil get possession in his room. (For want of room in these few sheets , I was forced in the Doctrinal part to leave out the Arguments I had prepared to prove the Saints Perseverance, drawn from these later Considerations.) Take heed of such unscriptural, uncomfortable tenents ; such as hold them are great deniers of, and enemies unto the doctrine of Gods free and distinguishing Grace, and of the powerfull working of Gods Spirit, and hereby are the greatest enemies unto themselves, and their own Salvation. Beware therefore of the leaven of this doctrine, which doth spread it self in too many places ; never believe that one who is a Child of God to day, may be a Child of the Devil to morrow ; that an heir of Heaven to day, may be an heir of Hell to morrow : hold fast and persevere in this truth, that God will carry on the good work which he hath begun, until he hath brought it to perfection ; that true Saints shall never totally and finally fall, but hold out and persevere to the end : believe firinly, that all the gracious being received into the armes of Gods mercy, are kept by the hand of his power ; and that his Faithfulness, as well as their Faith, is their shield : yea, that his Faithfulness is the shield of their Faith ; believe that none can pluck the gracious out of Gods hand, and let none pluck this truth out of your mind ; let none perswade you to the contrary, neither the Devil, nor any of the Children of Darkness, so long as the Father of Lights hath so clearly revealed it in the Word.

Use 2. The work of Grace being such a good work,
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work, and so abiding: methinks all of you should be very inquisitive, whether this good work be begun in you; look and see whether you have any evidence to shew of this good work; the wicked they can shew you the works of the Flesh, can you shew the works of the Spirit? see Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. the Apostle there doth enumerate the works of the Flesh; *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, of which I tell you before, as I have told you in times past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God:* And therefore such as do such works as these, are without the good work of Grace. Are the works of the Spirit manifest in you, such as Repentance, Godly sorrow for sin, Filial fear of God, hungering desires after Christ, Faith, Love, Humility, Meekness, Self-denial, Temperance, Sincerity, Righteousness, Zeal for Gods glory, Heavenly-mindedness? Have you found the beginnings of the good work in your effectual Calling and Regeneration? and is the good work carrying towards perfection in your Sanctification? do you find Sin more and more mortified, the World more and more crucified, Grace more and more strengthened? can you shew any evidences of the in-dwelling of the Spirit? have you the teachings and quicknings of the Spirit? are you led by the Spirit out of the way of sin, into the paths of holiness and new obedience? are you brought near by the Spirit unto God, and communion with him in his Ordinances? These are clear evidences of the good work. Nothing is more worthy your enquiry than

than this, whether the good work of Grace be wrought in you by the Spirit.

Use 3. Here you have a powerfull motive to quicken your endeavours after this good work of Grace, if for the present you are without it; nothing is really more desirable than Grace, which is so necessary, so excellent in it self, and withall so durable: If you can attain true Grace, you will get a jewel of the greatest worth and use, and which will never be taken from you; what are all other things which it is possible for any to gain in the world, in comparison with the gain of true Grace? will these things abide? can they prevent eternal misery? suppose you should get the best friends, most wise and wealthy, most cordial and faithful unto you; the best Husbands or Wives, most loving, sweet, and delightfull; Children full of sparkling wit and beauty, and most hopefull; suppose you should get wealth in abundance, Silver, Gold, Jewels, Houses, Goods, Lands, and a large Inheritance for your posterity; suppose you were lifted up upon the highest seat of worldly honour, advanced unto the degree of Nobility, yea unto Kingly Dignity, and with all these should you have a confluence of all sensual pleasures, and a Cup filled up to the brim of whatever delights any Creatures could yield, for you to drink of every day; yet the least dram of true Grace, accompanied with worldly poverty, disgrace, and affliction, is incomparable beyond all this excellency; for besides that these things are not a suitable good for the Soul, which is of higher and larger capacity than to be filled up with them, neither are they durable, if you had them you could not keep them; and you would find more bitterness in

in the loss of them, than ever you found sweetnes in the enjoyment of them ; the kindness and love of Friends may dye, and they may dye, be sure you will dye; your nearest relations may be suddenly snatch'd out of your bosomes ; your wealth may fly away swiftly like an Eagle towards Heaven ; your Honours may vanish away quickly like smoke in the air ; you may lose all whilst you live, be sure you must leave all when you dye ; and think what a miserable condition you will be in at death, if you have gained for your selves all your dayes only a portion in this life ; for when your dayes are spent, your portion will be spent, or left behind, and wholly lost as to you for ever ; and alas ! what must your soul do then ? what must that live upon when it is come forth of your body ? whither will your soul betake her self ? Alas ! Horroure and woe , the regions of darkness, the company of Devils , the treasures of Gods wrath, and the most dreadful torments of Hell, must be the portion of your souls and bodies too at the Resurrection , if you live and dye without this work of Grace upon you. But if you can attain unto true Grace, it will advance you unto the dignity of the Sons and Daughters of God ; it will joyne you in marriage unto Christ, and bring you into the embracements of his love ; it will repair Gods Image in you, and restore you in some measure unto mans primitive glory ; it will rescue you out of the Devils chains, and deliver you from the base servitude of sin ; it will bring yoe under the beams of the light of Gods countenance ; and fill you with most sweet peace of conscience, and sometimes such Soul-ravishing joy, as words cannot utter ;

ter ; it will enrich your souls with the Jewel of the greatest price here , and it will entitle you unto the treasures of glory, the undefiled, never fading inheritance of Heaven hereafter. And besides the other excellencies of Grace , this is none of the least, that true Grace can never be quite lost ; every thing without you may be lost, but Grace within you can never be quite lost ; whatever hath been wrought by you , may be taken from you , but your Grace cannot be lost ; that which God hath wrought in you , will abide with you ; your estate may fail, and your friends may fail, but your Grace will never fail ; your memory, judgment, and other gifts of mind may fail, and the strength of your body may fail, but the Grace of your Souls will never quite fail ; when flesh fails, and heart fails, your faith shall not quite fail, and God will not fail. And if your Grace cannot be lost, be sure your souls are safe , they cannot be lost ; your happiness is safe, that cannot be touched. If you can get true Grace, you shall never fall ; indeed you may fall into affliction, but you shall not fall into sin ; if you be not preserved from the evil worker , you shall be preferred from the evil work ; if you fall into some acts of sin, you shall not fall into a course of sin ; if you fall down, you shall not fall off ; if you fall back , you shall not fall away ; if you fall into the pit, you shall not fall into the bottomless pit ; if your bodies fall into the Grave , your souls shall not fall into Hell. As soon may Devils be received into Heaven; as you, if gracious, be cast into Hell ; if you get true Grace , you cannot quite lose it ; therefore you cannot miss of Glory : You shall as certainly have

50 *The Good Work performed.*

have it, as if you had already possession of it ; God will as soon turn the Angels out of Heaven, and turn his own dear Son out of Heaven, and leave that habitation himself ; as shut you out of Heaven at last , if you attain true Grace : Who then would be without Grace ? O then prize Grace, and desire Grace, and seek Grace, and be ready to receive Grace, and diligently improve all the means of Grace for the attainment of this Good Work of Grace within you.

Use 4. O what a full breast of the sweetest consolation is this to all such as are truly gracious, methinks your hearts should be filled with comfort, and leap for joy within you, when you hear and are assured out of the word, that the good work which God hath begun in you in this day of Grace, he will perform till the day of Christ, what hath been spoken by way of motive to sinners to incite them to get grace, may be applied to you that are gracious by way of comfort, none in the world have reason to take comfort but you, and you have the highest reason ; I know that many ungracious persons, who are still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, have mirth and chearfulness in their countenance and conversation, whatever their guilt and slavery, whatever their danger of eternal misery be, though they be already condemned and may be suddenly executed, and their ruine is like to be inevitable because of their security : On the contrary, I know that many truly gracious persons are full of fears and troubles, and walk up and down with a drooping countenance and a more sad heart, as if they were

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the persons that were designed unto destruction, as if they were miserable and should be miserable for ever ; I do not blame the jealousie of the gracious , lest they should be mistaken, but if upon a strict and impartial enquiry you can find evidences of the true work begun in you, although it be not yet brought to any great perfection, here you have a Well and Fountain opened (though some have endeavoured in vain to stop it) of the greatest comfort and encouragement, God who hath begun the good work in you will perform it, he will carry it on unto perfection, and *carry you on by his power through faith unto salvation*, 1 Pet. 1. 5. Some of you complain of affliction , but if you have grace you may well bear it, yea, and rejoice in it, because God is carrying on the good work of grace in you by it. Others complain of temptation, but if you have grace, though you be shaken you shall not be quite overcome, and if the tempter doth not presently depart from you, yet God hath promised his grace shall be sufficient for you. Some complain of disertion, if you have grace, though God may hide his face, he will not remove his love, and remember that there is a bright side of the cloud, of which you now see onely the dark side; and ere long the shadows of this black night will be chased away by the bright beams of the light of Gods countenance in the morning of his discovery of himself, and love unto you. Others complain of the strength of their corruptions, if you have grace it will by degrees weaken them, and in the end get a perfect victory over them. Some complain of the weakness of their graces, but you may be assured that your graces as weak as they are, shall never quite fail ; God hath engaged to carry on his own

work

work in you, which he hath begun. Others complain that they have no evidences of any true grace, and they are afraid they shall never hold out, that they shall fall, and fall away, and turn fearful Apostates; but your graces may be true notwithstanding your doubts, and you may stand fast notwithstanding your fears; and let me tell you, that Hypocrites who are likely to prove Apostates are usually very self-confident, I fear others who are without such jealousies of themselves, more than you. Happy, happy you that ever you were born, if you are indeed new born; happy you are in life, how mean and miserable soever some of you may be esteemed by the world, none are so high-born as those that are new-born; none are so beautiful as those who have Gods Image; none are so adorned as those who have the robes of Christs righteousness; none are so enriched as those who have the riches of grace, none have such company as those who have fellowship with the Father and his son Jesus Christ; none have such attendance as those which are attended by Angels; none have such work as those that are employ'd in Gods service; none have such liberty as those which are freed from sin and Satan; none have such peace as those w^{ch} have the peace of conscience; none have such joy as those which have the joyes of the holy Ghost; none have such safety as those which are secured against total Apostacy and eternal misery, and this is your happiness who are gracious in life: You will be happy also at death, if your grace do not free you from the stroke of death, it will free you from the sting of death; if it do not free you from the first death, it will free you from the second death; such as do not like your life, do desire your death,

death, Balaams wish is to be found in the most ungracious wretch, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his.* But your happiness in the conclusion of your lives is beyond the apprehension of the wicked, none can expresse with what ravishing comforts and joys some gracious persons have departed out of this life to their Fathers house. To conclude, you will be happy to eternity : if you are gracious, you will be glorious, if holy here, you will be happy hereafter. If God have begun the good work of grace, he will perform it untill the day of Christ, you shall not lose your grace, and therefore you cannot miss of glory, grace is glory begun, and you shall be transformed more and more into the Image of God, from glory to glory, untill you arrive unto perfection of glory ; ere long the Lord Jesus will appear, and then you shall appear with him in glory, then you shall be presented before him blameless and without spot ; then you will lift up your heads with joy and your hearts will be filled with delight when you are raised up out of your graves, and caught up into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and are there welcommed into his presence with most ravishing looks and expressions of love, and he giveth you full possession of his Kingdome: then you will better know the excellency of this grace which you have now received, when the fruit of it is brought forth, when the bud shall open in the flower, when the dawn is come to the day ; when the promise is come to the performance, when faith is turned into vision and hope is turned into fruition, and all graces are arrived unto perfection, O the joys ! You you only are happy that have this good work begun, which the lord will perform till

The Good Work performed.

till the day of Christ. O then admire Gods free grace in electing and calling you ; rejoice in him and be very thankfull and humble and watchful and walk worthy of him who hath called you to his Kingdom and glory.

There is one more Use behind, which is of caution especially to young professors to take heed of Apostacy and backsliding, which without great care and heed you may fall into , notwithstanding this Doctrine : and therefore I have inserted a Letter for your caution, wherein you have a sad instance of a grievous back-slader, take heed by his Falls.



A Cautionary Letter sent by an unknown Author, unto some Youths, thus Directed.

To the Youths belonging to Mr. Thomas Vincent.

Dear Friends,

Hearing of your Christian Meetings for Retention, it came into my Heart, to Write the following Lines unto you; which I hope will not Discourage you, but Caution you: Possibly you will be very Inquisitive, who should be the Party that Writes this Letter; but for some Reasons, he desires to be excused from Subscribing his Name to it: And assure yourselves (how ever it be resented) his intendment is for good. It pleased God in my younger years (as I hope) to work a real change upon my heart, which was so visible to those about me, that it could not be hid from their Notice, I having been a very wicked Youth before: This sudden and great Alteration, filled the Godly with Joy; but the Wicked made it matter of Laughture and Derision. It pleased the Lord mightily to carry on this Work a pretty while; my League with Sin was quite broken off, my heart was (I think) united to the Lord Jesus Christ, and I was in love with him, and his Word and Ordinances, yea, all the ways

of Holiness were my delight ; I found such sweetness in the ways of God, that I did even wonder then, that any could take delight in following any Course of Sin. I was (like Peter) confident, that all the Men on Earth, and Devils in Hell, shoud not draw me into a course of sin again : I was constant in the performance of secret Dutys, in which I spent no small time, even all I could spare from my Masters business, and then had great Purposes and Resolutions, that if the Lord spared me till I could command my own time, I would spend much more than I had spent, in Religious Dutys : Briefly the hardest of Duties, and heaviest Burthens seemed then light unto me. The Lord had given me great Conquests over my Corruptions, that I was as in Heaven while on Earth. But alas ! my dear Friends, this lasted not above a year and a half, or there abouts ; for being ignorant of Satans temptations, and of mine own hearts deceitfulness and baseness, I dreamed not of any other thing, but what I had found. But here I was hindred awhile in writing, by a flood of Tears and Sorrow, to think how strangely my condition is altered so that I can but just call to mind the days of old, and the years of the Right Hand of the most High.

Now having given you an account (in short) of my joyselest times, of my Halcyen days, which are almost a score of years past with me (yet I hope will be always present with you. God grant, ye may not sin them away, and taste of my miserys) I shall give you a few Lines of my sad and nretched time since ; together with the occasion of my troubles.

When as the Lord had dealt thus graciously with me, the Quakers Opinion being newly risen up, I was often talking with them, and thereby put upon reading Disputes, to defend my self against them, as also was very eager,

eager to know all Opinions, which stole so fast upon me, that it swallowed up the most of that time, which I should have spent in Reading more profitable things, in Meditation, in Heart Examination, and in Prayer. I was then over-conceited of my Wit, very proud of my Gifts, apt to undervalue all that had not the like: Yea, doubtless Pride was the chief sin, for which the Lord left me to commit so many evils. By little and little my communion with God abated, I fell into some smaller sins, Dutys were first slightely performed, then totally neglected for a confiderable time. Oh how like a Beast did I lie down, and rise, without seeking the Lord! I suppose the whole Earths Riches, should not formerly have made me omit one Praying time; but now I might be numbered among the Heathens, and the Families that call not upon God. After this, I deserted (as much as I could) all good Company, sin now came in by whole Troops, any frothy persons were my Companions: I then exceeded due bounds in Eating, Drinking, Sleeping. I fell to Gaming, Stealing, Lying, full of unchriste desires, hardly restrained from committing the sin of Uncleanness. Conscience was much wasted, the tenderness gone; could I give a Catalogue of the sins I have been left to commit, it would puzzle your Charitie, to think I ever had Grace: I was many times under dreadful apprehensions, what should be the issue of my wicked Life and Apostacy. The Lord then followed me with one Scourge after another, my way was hedged up, that I have been forced to submit to the Lord, and have been under great humblings; but a strong temptation, when the Lords hands hath been removed, hath overcome me again, and in the like manner several times: And now I can set my seal to that truth, in Prov. 14. 14. The Backslider in heart, shall be

filled with his own ways. Very sad is that Man or
Mortals place, wherein the Lord punishment by suffering sin
prevale over them : And how can I expect, that such a
reproach I should be the instrument to do you the least
good, only this I think, the Loricas have great Wis-
dom as good by evil instruments ; wherefore it may be of
some use to some one of you. For, me thought, when I
heard of your forwardness, I foresaw as it were one ready
to decline in his fervour, another fainting, and grow-
ing weary of Gods ways : one ready to venture upon sin,
another beginning to set up in the world, and is swallowed
up with business ; cares of Family, fears of Poverty,
breakings out into Passions when their affairs have not
desired success, discontent, then growing remiss in
Closet and Family duties ; first neglecting one duty, then
at last Religion almost laid aside, then falling into loose
and drinking Company, neglect of general and particular
Callings. O beware dear Youths, for the Lords sake,
and for your own sakes : the least that can come of such
things is great dishonour to God, and great trouble to
your selves, such as you may never get off while you live,
you will be pierced through with many sorrows ; if there
be no peace to the Wicked, surely then the Godly must
not have peace in wickedness. You will still be question-
ing and fearing (as I do this day) whether the work
was true, and these sins like the spots of Gods Children

Then, I pray you, accept of a word of advice, and
sleight it not, though commonly known. 1. Then beware
of Pride at all times ; bodily pride, spiritual pride : Of
Gifts and Graces, Oh ! Labour much (if ever you will be
persevering Christians) against this sin, I know the
Devil will be very busie to puff you up with good conceits
of your own duties : be not contented with Gifts, labour
chiefly to grow in Grace, and in particular this grace of

Humility

Humility, Isa. 57.15. 2dly, Beware of Disputings, if you are addicted to them, I verily think the Devil will furnish you with Arguments, and new Notions, with design that they shall eat out the power of godliness. 3dly, Beware of coveting many Books; Books are good helps if rightly used: study well those Truths that are weakly Preached. 4thly, Fear every motion to neglect a known Duty, or to commit a known Sin; grieve not that blessed Comforter. 5thly, Beware of taking the utmost liberty you might take; if you were sure your hearts would crave no more, in eating, drinking, sleeping, apparel, recreations, &c. 6thly, Make great conscience to discharge relative Duties to Parents, Masters, and the like: those that wrong Masters of their Time, are as real Thieves, as those that steal Goods or Money; read over the Promises and Covenants you made with your Masters in your Indentures. 7thly, Take heed what Company you associate with; go with fear into a Womans company; set a watch upon your heart and eyes. 8thly, Avoid all unmerciful severities to your bodies, by too frequent or over-long fasting, or the like, for the Devil is very subtile with young People here, doubtless he puts them upon it, to the end he may tire them out, and make Gods wayes burthen som to them. 9thly, Beware of scornful thoughts towards them that are without, have bowels of pity and love towards them. 10thly, Be careful to praise God for Mercy; this duty I was much wanting in, though I was loaded with mercies. 11thly, Beware of self-confidence, lean only on Christ. 12thly, Go not to a Tavern or Alehouse, but with fear and great watchfulness; go not at all, but upon necessary occasion: — Take heed of Idleness, take heed of Tale-bearing. I have done, only desire your joyn Prayers for me, that the Lord would heal my broken bones.

bones, and that he will prevent your fallings into sin.
Matth. 18. 29, 20.

A Return of Thanks to the Author of the Letter.

SIR,

I believe you will not a little wonder to see your Letter (written and sent so privately unto my dear youths) come forth unto publick view, without your knowledge : I hope you will take it as a sufficient excuse for me who have taken confidence to do it, that not knowing either your Person, or place of abode, nor any way how to come or send to you, I was not in a capacity of asking your leave, as I would have done, with the return of many thanks for your seasonable Caution and Advice which you have given unto young Professors : I suppose that these lines will come into your hands without the notice of any, which you so purposely shun, they are accompanied with my prayers for your perfect recovery, and as you desire that God would heal your broken bones, and restore to you the joy of his Salvation, and establish you for the future with his free Spirit. You have, I fear, been a rock of offence, not like our Saviour, but like Peter when he fell : unto those who have been acquainted with your Profession, and with your fall ; if by the publishing of your Case, you prove a Rock above Water, to keep some young ones from Shipwrack, I hope you will not be offended with this publication. The flood of tears you speak of in the remembrance of your foolish

lish back-sliding and departure from God, together with the honest design of your Letter, giveth me grounds to hope the best concerning your state.

I am loth to rake into those wounds which seem to be bleeding, and to answer kind and seasonable admonitions with sharp reproofs; your free and ingenious confessions evidently demonstrate that you have a faithful Reprover in your own bosome; and if you can make such acknowledgments unto men for their Caution, I doubt not but you have often made these acknowledgments unto God, in order unto your own Remission: I should gladly have read a line or two in your Paper, of your Recovery; but by the broken Bones which you complain of in the close, you seem to be down still, I will not say in regard of sin (I hope you have long ago been awakned from your grosser neglects of God and Duty, and have broken off your looser Company and Conversation) but in regard of Sorrow, and a disconsolate Spirit, and it may be are still without that Liveliness, and Vigour which you had at first; and truly I don't wonder at your broken bones, after you have ventured upon such breaches of Gods Laws; I don't wonder at Gods frowns after such provocations; and that God should hide himself from you, when you have run away from him; if God withdraw his Spirit from you a long time, in regard of its Witnessing, Comforting, and Quickening Operation, I don't wonder, when you have not only grieved, but quenched, and driven away the Spirit, by your so great Backslidings. Yet one place of Scripture I would commend unto you for your encouragement, and consolation, which possibly you have not taken such notice of,

and

and that is, Hos. 11. 7, 8, 9. My people are bent to Backsliding from me, though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him. How shall I give thee up Ephraim ! How shall I deliver thee Israel ! How shall I make thee as Admah ! How shall I set thee as Zeboim ! Mine heart is turned within me, my Repentings are kindled together. I will not Execute the fierceness of mine anger ; I will not return to destroy Ephraim : For I am God, and not man. Your sin hath been not only Backsliding (which is a high affront and indignity offered unto God, casting a great slur upon Him, and his Ways, as if upon trial of Him and the Creature, the ways of Holiness, and the ways of Sin, the latter were the better and more eligible, this hath been the Language of your Courses) but you have been bent to Backsliding ; the Devil hath hampered, and held you in his snares when you have fallen, and when you have endeavoured to rise, he hath by his Cords pulled you down again ; and your Heart hath been bent to revolt from God (this you intimate in your Letter) It is likely, you have been often called to return to the most High by his Messengers, and Ministers, but still you have persisted to dishonour God, instead of exalting him ; this hath been your carriage towards God, as it was the carriage of Israel of old : But see the Carriage of God towards such Backsliders ; What is that ? Is it Fury, Indignation, Vengeance ? What doth God say to such a People ? Is it, How shall I not give thee up to ruins ? How shall I not deliver thee to destruction ? How shall I not consume thee with the Fire of mine anger, as I consumed Admah, and Zeboim, with Sodom and Gomorrah of old, by Fire and Brimstone from Heaven ?

ven? Now read and tremble! Consider and wonder! Gods Language is quite contrary unto this: *How shall I give thee up Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? And set thee as Zeboim?* One would have thought that Gods heart and hand too should have been turned against *Ephraim*, backsliding and provoking *Ephraim*, and that his anger should not only have been kindled against *Ephraim*, but blown up by such provocations into such a flame as should have proved unquenchable; but wonder and weep that you have provoked such a gracious God, so ready to be reconciled: Gods heart is turned within him towards *Ephraim*, and his repentings are kindled together; and he promiseth he will not execute the fierceness of his anger in the destruction of *Ephraim*; and the reason of all he giveth not any motive from *Ephraim*, but all was from Himself, *For I am God, and not Man:* What man would have born what God hath born? Who would have been so affronted and not have avenged himself if it lay in the power of his hand to do it? But God hath not only forborn to punish, but is also ready to forgive, and that because he is God and not Man; his Mercies are infinitely beyond the mercies of men; our bowels are marble in comparison with Gods most tender compassions; he blotteth out transgressions for his Names sake; and he hath promised to heal backslidings, *Hos. 14. vers. 3.* Read especially the third Chapter of *Jeremiah* through, and be encouraged to return unto, and for the future to follow the Lord fully: Take the counsel which Christ giveth unto the backsliding Church of *Ephesus* after she had left her first love, *Rev. 2. 4, 5.* Remember whence thou art fallen, and

repent and do thy first works. And the counsel which he giveth to the languishing Church of Sardis, Rev. 3.2. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die.

Had I time and room, and were more exactly acquainted with the present state of your Soul, I should further attempt to give you some suitable advice out of the Word of God, by way of requital for your great care and kindness towards our Youths; in the mean time let these few acknowledgements be accepted from a

Real well-wisher to your Soul,
Thomas Vincent.

Cautionary Motives and Directions unto Youths professing Religion, to keep them from Apostacy, and Back-sliding.

YOU have heard, that the good Work which God hath begun in the day of Grace, he will perform until the day of Christ: Yet lest any should abuse this Doctrine, and turn the Grace of God into wantonness, lest any should by presuming that the good Work is begun in them, and thence concluding, that they shall never fall away, presume also to indulge themselves unto sin, and hence take occasion to give way unto licentiousness; therefore I shall adde in the close a serious Caution unto all, especially to young Professors. In *1 Cor. 10.* and at the beginning of that Chapter the Apostle doth spread before the *Corinthians* some examples out of Scripture of the falls of the Children of *Israel* in the Wilderness, their falling into sin, and falling into mischief

and

and ruine thereby, ver. 11. he telleth them, that all those things happened unto them for examples, and were written for their admonition ; and therefore he giveth caution to them, ver. 12. *Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.*

In like manner I have spread before you, a Letter directed to you from one who when he was young, and an Apprentice (as many of you are) was wrought upon, as you have been, he telleth you what were his Attainments, and his Enjoyments, so that he then was an high and forward Professor ; but wirthal, he doth acknowledg that in a short time he declined, fell into sin, and became a fearful Backslider, and as he hath writ it, so I have published it for your admonition, that I might give you the Apostles caution, *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.*

Motives to keep from Apostacy, and Backsliding.

Met. 1. Some have and may fall, and Apostate from the Ways of God, that have made a high profession of Religion, attained great Illuminations, Gifts, and Tafts of Spiritual things ; and have been thought by others, and themselves too, to have stood as sure as any ; therefore all that think they stand, especially you that are young Professors, should take heed lest you fall. The Apostle telleth *Timothy*, 2 Tim. 4. 10. *That Demas had forsaken him, having loved this present world.* And before that, 1 Tim. 1. 19, 20. *Of Hymeneus and Alexander, that they had put away a good Conscience, made shipwrack of Faith, and learned to Blaspheme.*

And the Apostle Peter speaketh, 2 Pet. 2. 20. 22.
 of some that had escaped the pollutions of the World,
 through the knowledg of Christ, who were entangled
 again and overcome, unto whom it happened according to
 the true Proverb: *The Dog is turned to his own Vomit* again, and the Sow that was washed, unto her
wallowing in the Mire. And our Saviour telleth us
 in the Explication of the Parable of the Sower,
Mat. 13. 20, 21. That he which receiveth the Seed
 in stony places, is he which beareth the Word, and anon
 with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself,
 but dureth for a while; for when Tribulation, or Per-
 secution ariseth because of the Word, by and by he is
 offended. Indeed such as have true Grace, can ne-
 ver totally fall, as hath been proved; but many
 may have that which is like unto true Grace, and
 may fall totally from it; they may lose that which
 they seemed to have.

2. Apostacy is a very high God-provoking sin,
Heb. 10. 38. If any man draw back, my Soul shall
 have no pleasure in him. This drawing back is not
 to be understood of the backslidings of Gods Chil-
 dren, but of the Apostacy of Hypocrites, such a
 drawing back as is unto Perdition, ver. 39. Gods
 Soul hath no pleasure in them, that is, he is highly
 displeased with them: Apostates do in effect say,
 that upon trial, they have found the Devil to be a
 better Master than Christ, and the ways of Sin and
 Wickedness, though they lead to Death and Hell,
 to be more Eligible, than the ways of God and
 Holiness, though they lead to Life and Glory.

3. Besides the sin of Apostacy it self which is so
 hainous, such as are guilty of it, do usually grow
 worse than they were before, in all kind of licenti-
ous

ous Conversation, see Mat. 12. 43, 44, 45. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, and returneth again, he taketh sever other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwelt there, and the last estate of that man, is worse than the first. Apostates are the first born children of the Devil, and the Lusts of their Father they will do, he dwelleth in them, and ruleth over them, and they are ready at his motion for any wickedness, besides uncleanness, Debauchery, Mischief, Vilany, Oaths, Blasphemy, such persons usually have the most desperate enmity against God and Godliness, and of all others do prove the greatest persecutors of the Saints. Yea, Apostates are upon the threshold of the sin against the Holy Ghost, and many of them do step over into it, and then there is no returning for them and renewing of them unto Repentance; no Sacrifice for their sin, nor Remission attainable by them; so that their damnation is certain, and the fiery Indignation unavoidable which shall devour them: I don't say that all Apostates do fall into the unpardonable sin; yet I had almost said, that all Apostates do fall so as never to rise again in the Event and Issue; if their sins be not unpardonable, they prove almost always unpardoned, *Jude ver. 12.* of his Epistle, compareth some to Trees whose Fruit withereth, without Fruit, twice Dead, plucked up by the Roots. Such are Apostates, whose seeming Fruit withering, and whose seeming Life being lost are twice dead, and plucked up so by the Roots, that they can never receive Life again. I don't remember that I have often either read, or heard of an Apostate that hath been converted. And therefore, &c.

4. Apostacy doth almost ever end in perdition,

Heb.

*Heb. 10. 39. We are not of them that draw back to perdition : Such bring upon themselves destruction, and swift destruction, 1 Pet. 2. 1. & ver. 3. Their judgment lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. God doth quickly awake unto the Vengeance which he hath appointed for them. They bring also upon themselves most dreadful destruction ; besides the torture of the Body, which such must undergo in the flames of Hell, they will surpass others in the anguish and horrour of their minds, none will have such furious reflections, and horrible lashes of Conscience as Apostates, when they perceive what happiness they fell from, when they fell from the ways of Holiness, and what misery they fell into when they fell into sin. Beware then you that profess Religion now in your younger years, that you do not prove Apostates when you are elder, and vereifie that prophane Proverb, *Young Saints, and old Devils* ; and so bring upon your selves such aggravated Guilt, and draw down such an unsupportable weight of wrath, as will sink you so low in Hell.*

5. If you have the good work of Grace begun in you, and God have engaged to perform it, and keep you that you shall never fall away, yet it is by Motives considered, and Means made use of that he doth it, which if you should live in the neglect of, you cannot expect to be helped by God from total Apostacy, and such a presume upon Gods keeping them in the neglect of the means which he hath appointed for their establishment, it is a great symptom of their Hipocrisie, and the unsoundness of the Grace which they seem to have.

6. Though God will not suffer you totally to fall from Grace, if the good Work be in truth begun,
yet,

yet, without great heed, you may fall into great decay of Grace ; your Graces may languish and so be ready to die, *Rev. 3.2.* You may fall into swooning Fits, and a lethargick distemper, so that there shall appear little evidence of life in you, either to your selves or others. You may, instead of the sweet meltings for sin, which you have grow insensible, and contract a great stupidity and hardness of heart, instead of your plyableness and readiness to Spiritual Duties, yon may contract a great littleness and indisposition : instead of your Humility and Self-loathing, you may grow very proud and self-conceited : instead of your Meek and gentle Temper, you may grow peevish and passionate : instead of your uprightness of heart, and single eye at Gods Glory, you may spoyl most of your Duties with Hypocrefie : instead of Self-denial and Temperance, you may indulge your self and grow lisencious in a great measure ; you may lose much of your Contentment and Patience, and the fear of God which you now have, your hungrily desire after Christ may be abated, your now strong Faith may be enfeebled, your flames of Love may be quenched, the flame quite gone, and only some coals or sparks remain unperceivable under the Ashes : your hopes of Heaven may be lost as to the liveliness and delightful working of them. *Therefore beware lest you fall.*

7. If yo do not fall totally from Grace, yet without heed you may fall foully into Sin ; you have read in Scripture of gross sins which some Saints have been overtaken with ; *Noah's Drunkenness, Lot's Incest, David's Adultery and Murder, Job's and Jeremiah's cursing their Birth day, Jonah's passionate speeches unto God for sparing Nineveh,*

Peter's

Peter's denial of his Master, and the like : and if you look not well to your selves, you also (though you have true Grace) may fall into some foul sins, unto the dishonour of God and your Profession, unto the wounding of Christ and your Conscience, unto the grieving of the Spirit and God's People, unto the eclipsing of the light of God's Countenance, unto the interrupting all sensible Communion with God, unto the darkning your Evidence for Heaven, unto the losing all spiritual joy and peace, unto the provoking God to scourge you severely in your Bodies, Estates, Names, Friends, to deliver you to Satan and the tyrannizing power of Lust : you may fall so as hereby to be filled not only with fears, but with horours, and not only to faint through doubt of your estates, but also to sink through an almost utter despair of Mercy ; you may sin so as not only to lose Gods smiles, but also to gain his frowns, and having lost all evidences for Heaven, you may be brought even to the brink of Hell in your own apprehension ; sad and doleful is the condition of some backsliding children of God through their falls, which should be a warning to others to take heed of the like.

8. Though you are truly gracious, yet you are in danger of falling, and in great danger without great heed ; partly through the temptations of Satan, that implacable, busie, watchful, invisible, false, deceitful enemy, who sometimes will furiously assault, and like a roaring Lion fall upon you, to make a prey of and devour you ; but most commonly will use cunning insinuations with you, suitable to your natural dispositions and inclinations, and by his secret snares endeavour to entangle you before

before you are awar : Partly you are in danger of falling through the world , which sometimes will smile upon you to allure you , at other times will frown upon you to affright you ; sometimes will promise its good things to draw you , at other times will threaten its evil things to drive you unto sin . But the chief danger of all which you are in of falling , is from your selves , your own deceitful hearts , and the remainders of unmortified corrupt Flesh within you ; hereby you may be betrayed , and the Flesh joyning with the Devil and the World together , you may be hurried unto the commission of such sins , which now you think you would not commit , might you gain the whole worlds Riches , and have all the Imperial Diadems of the Earth , thrown down at your feet .

9. You may be kept from falling , if you look well to your standing ; whatever your danger be , God can keep you , and hold up your goings in his Paths that your footsteps slip not , see Jude 14 . To him that is able to keep you from falling , and to present you faultless before the presence of his Glory , with exceeding joy , &c . Yea , he hath promised to keep you , and hath engaged his Faithfulness to do it , in your applying your selves to him , making use of the means which he hath appointed for your upholding , and establishment , 2 Thes . 3 . 3 . But the Lord is faithful who shall establish you , and keep you from evil . And I shall add , that it is more easie (besides the Honour brought hereby unto God , and the unexpressible benefit and comfort to your selves) to stand , not to fall , and than to arise & get up when you are fallen : It is no easie thing to recover out of a Backsliding estate , such as Backslide very much do-

not usually, either easily, or presently recover themselves, and many do never recover themselves fully as long as they live, and as they lose some measures of Grace here, so they are like to miss of those Degrees of Glory, which otherwise they would have attained unto.

Directions to keep from Apostacy, and Backsliding.

1. **L**ook to it that the good work be indeed begun in your hearts, that you have Grace of the right Kind; if you should prove (notwithstanding all your Profession) unsound in the Main, rotten at the Core, false-hearted Hypocrites, you are in great danger of total Apostacy, against which you have no promise of God for your security. The Profession of Hypocrites is built upon a Sandy foundation, which the wind of Affliction, and storms of Persecution will overturn: It is only true Grace that is of an establishing Nature, *Heb. 13.9.* *It is a good thing that the Heart be established with Grace:* Only the truly Gracious are built upon the Rock of Ages where they are safe, and however they may be shaken by Troubles, and Temptations, yet they shall never be utterly cast down, and quite overturned.

2. Be very humble, *Prov. 16.18.* *Pride goeth before Destruction, and a haughty Spirit, before a fall.* Tall Cedars are overthrown with the Wind, when humble and low Shrubs are hardly touched by its blasts; and when God resisteth the Proud, and suffereth them to be thrown down, he giveth Grace to the Lowly, and strengtheneth them to stand.

3. Stand

3. Stand not in your own strength, none have fallen more foully than the presumptuous Self-confident, labour for a fear and Jealousie of your selves, Rom. 11. 20. Be not high-minded, but fear: Let your confidence and strength be in the Lord: Be strong in the Grace which is in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. 2. 1. Have recourse to him for Grace to help in every need, and under every assault and temptation which you have to sin; Christ is able to succour, and it is his Office to succour, and he is ready to succour, he pitys you when tempted, is touched with a feeling of your infirmities, Heb. 4. 15. hath invited you to come unto him, ver. 16. and hath promised he will bruise Satan under your feet shortly, Rom. 16. 20. and in the mean time that his Grace shall be sufficient for you, 2 Cor. 12. 9.

4. Study and apply the Promises of perseverance, and preservation from sin, that God will confirm you to the end, 1 Cor. 1. 8. That he will hold you in his hand, from whence none shall pluck you, Job. 10. 29. That he will keep you from departing from him, Jer. 32. 40. That he will preserve you from every evil work, and that unto his Heavenly Kingdom, 2 Tim. 4. 16. The whole Scripture is useful this way, David did hide Gods Word in his heart, as a preservative against sin, Psal. 119 11. But the Promises are more especially useful, being of such a cleansing and establishing vertue, especially these and such like Promises, whereby God hath obliged and engaged himself to establish his people from falls. Be therefore conversant with the Word, and receive it not only in the Light of it, but also in the Love of it, whereby you will be kept from falling into either damnable error, or scandalous sin.

5. Avoid vain janglings, and an itch to dispute with such as are of contrary Opinions, take heed how you have any conversis with those that are tainted in their Judgments, or at least of wrangling disputes with them, for besides your hazzard, especially whilst young, and unexperienced of being seduced by them; you will be in danger of declining in the vigour of your Spirits, and fervour of love to God: As the Author of the Letter hath told you his sad experience, how his fall began upon his engaging in disputes with the Quakers; acquaint your selves well with the Principles of Religion, which you have in your Catechisms, & see how they are proved by the Scriptures; hold fast those truths, and turn away from those that endeavour to steal them away, and rob you of them.

6. Take heed of sensuality, and indulging the Flesh, in youth you may be most prone to this, temptations may be pressing, and Inclinations strong; but you must Exercise your selves in Self-denial, and keep a hard Hand over your rebellious Flesh, you must (if need be) keep under your Body, be sure to bring your sensual Appetites and Desires, in subjection unto your Reason, regulated by the Word; if they get loose, and the Mastery, think what Precipices of Sin you are like to fall into.

7. Beware of Worldly mindedness, that you be not swallowed up with Worldly business, and encumbered with the Affairs of this Life; I am sure this will cause a great decay in the power of Godliness. If the World by reason of your Callings, have most of your time, take heed that it hath not all; reserve some time every day for Religious Exercises, and let them have most of your hearts; take

take heed of Inordinate Cares; and Fears; and Griefs, about Worldly things on one side, and Inordinate Love, Desires, and Delight on the other side, but endeavour to get the World Crucified to you, and your Hearts Crucified to it: Make use of the Cross of Christ in order hereunto, and take frequent View of the transcendent Glory and Happiness of the other World, which will disgrace the World in your esteem.

8. Stand continually upon your Watch; beware of Sin in the beginning of it, do not entertain Sin so much as in your Minds, with any Pleasing Delightful thoughts; refrain secret Sins, otherwise your Feet will slide up before you are aware; take heed of the least Degree of Apostacy, observe your Hearts when they begin to go off from God, and endeavour with all speed to recover, and arise again, when you feel your selves beginning to fall.

9. Labour after further growth in Grace every day, give all diligence to make some Additions daily to your Graces, and hereby you will both make your Calling and Election sure, and if you do these things, you shall never Fall, 2 Pet. 1. 10. Whilst Grace is Growing, it cannot be upon the Declining, and therefore you cannot Fall.

10. Prize and Improve the means of Grace, the Word, and Sacraments, and all strengthening Ordinances, look unto Gods institution of them, as the means of Establishment, and seek after Gods presence in them; wait for the Breathings of his Spirit, and cherish the Spirits influences both of Grace, and of Comfort, which are of great Efficacy to keep from falls.

11. Make

11. Make the most fruitful experienced established and zealous warm-hearted Christians, your most intimate Companions; Forsake not only the company of the loose and profane, but also of such as have a Form of Godliness, but deny the power thereof; as the Apostle's advice is, *2 Tim. 3. 5.* From such turn away: Associate your selves as much as you can with them that fear the Lord, and labour to improve by their company; great encouragement and help you may attain, by the converse of lively Christians.

12. Set God always before your eyes, as *David* did, and withall telleth us, Because God was at his right hand, he should not be moved; *Psal. 16. 8.* Temptations to sin will little move you, when you actually look to, and consider Gods eye upon you; you will easily answer and repel temptations, *How can I do this wickedness, and sin against God.*

13. Labour for a strong and fervent love to God; many waters cannot quench the fire of this love: whilst your hearts are mounting upwards in this flame unto God, you are not in such danger of falling downwards, and giving ear unto temptations, which would draw you unto sin: Labour to dwell in the love of God, and in the love one of another; hereby you will dwell in God, and God in you, *1 John 4. 6.* And whilst you dwell in God, you cannot fall from him.

14. Be much in secret converse with God, in Meditation, Contemplation, Ejaculation, secret Prayer; get often to your knees when you are alone, and there bewail Sin, and pray hard for thy Mortification of your special Corruptions: secret Duties seriously, diligently, and constantly performed, are both

both an evidence of sincerity, and a great preservative against Apostacy.

16. Lastly, and chiefly, labour for much of the grace of Faith, and put it forth into daily exercise, 2 Cor. 1. 24. *By Faith ye stand.* If ye would resist the Devil, you must be stedfast in Faith, 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9. If you would quench his fiery Darts, you must get on and hold up the Sheild of Faith, Ephe. 6. 16. If you would be kept by the power of God, it must be through Faith unto salvation, 1 Pet. 1. 5. Such as draw back unto Perdition, it is through unbelief; Such as hold out, it is through Faith, to the saving of their souls, Heb. 10. 39. I shall shut up my Discourse with two Scriptures, 1 Cor. 16. 13. *Watch yee, stand fast in the Faith, quit ye like men, be strong.* And 1 Cor. 15. 58. *Therefore my beloved Brethern, be stedfast and immovable, alwaies abounding in the work of the Lord: For as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*